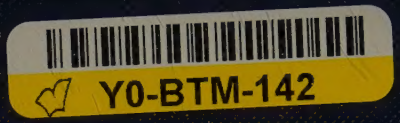
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A SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
1730–1780

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1730-1780

BY

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Bringing things to light, alone and of itself, is of no manner of use, any otherwise than as entertainment or diversion.—Bishop Butler, *On the Ignorance of Man.*

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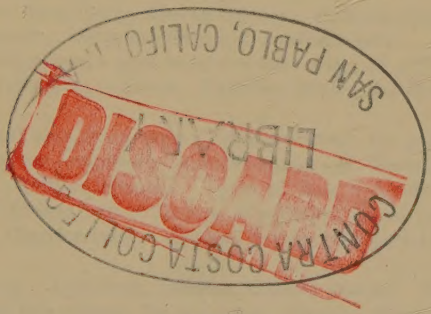

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CHAPTER XIII

POETRY—(*continued*)

I

THUS the new poets were quickened, and their work was often definitely moulded, by the study of older English masters, and of the classics ; the spirit of Greece, and not only that of Horace, was already at work. All these influences, as will appear, meet in Gray, and some of them in Collins and in Chatterton. They are less to be discerned in the poets who are noticed in this chapter, and who, though falling into certain groups, are a scattered band. Few of them are potent writers; and yet, viewed as a whole, they perhaps make us feel, better than Gray or Thomson, the wide distribution of the poetic instinct. They form no school, and often know nothing of one another ; and they come out at different dates, like the leaves in the late cold English spring. Before speaking of Dyer and Shenstone, or trying to make a selection from the crowd of lesser names, it is well to interpose a note on the Scottish poetry, which has a history of its own. On the whole, the streams in the two countries run apart, while there are various cross-channels connecting them. Thomson, Blair, and Armstrong, though they did not all come South, belong to English literature ; they did not use Scots, or the characteristic national metres. Macpherson, with his 'Ossian,' is a case apart ; and so, in another way, is Percy with his *Reliques* (Ch. xv.). The popular ballad is a real link between the two nations, being both an English and a Scottish form ; it goes to and fro over the Border. It is a lyric, but it is not simply a song ; as Shenstone well observed, it 'must contain some little story, real or invented.' It is in song, rightly so called, that the Scots, during this period, excel the English : song which is sung by the people, and the best of which is literature.

Scots is as good as any other form of English ; but an Englishman has to learn its vocabulary and also its pronunciation. A poem may contain few Northern words or none, and yet, if read with a Southern accent, it ceases to be itself. This is equally

true of the Scottish songs, and of that other body of verse, descriptive, satiric, elegiac, or epistolary, which is inherently un-English, and which is associated with two or three distinctive measures, above all with the six-line stanza whose origins lie far back in Provence. The distinction between the two kinds, which is so familiar in Burns, is an ancient and traditional one; both of them express the national genius in its intensest form; and both, in the eighteenth century, are abundant.

Still, the record here must be a brief one; for there is no considerable and fertile poet between Ramsay and Burns, though Fergusson must receive due honours. Allan Ramsay himself [1] (1686-1758) had done nearly all his work before 1730. He is a most uneven writer; but he had ministered to British poetry just when succour was most wanted. What he wrote in mere English, encouraged by Pope and other English friends, may be neglected. But his pictures of raw life in Edinburgh—sometimes in the guise of mock-mourning, like the *Elegy on Lucky Wood*—are admirable; they show the Scot unbuttoned; and we know how Burns adopted the pattern, which is like nothing in English. Ramsay's familiar epistles to his friends are milder, and this good, old, and most flexible form he also handed down. His additions to *Christ's Kirk on the Green* are amazingly spirited, wild, and in keeping; and his *fabliau*, the *Monk and the Miller's Wife*, is among the best of its rampant kind. At the other extreme are his pastorals, among which the *Gentle Shepherd* (1725) remained famous in both countries. It is full of absurd plotting and of commonplace writing; but the shepherds and shepherdesses have a homely yet poetic reality, a humour and archness, and at moments a tone of passion, which are not approached in the pastorals of Ramsay's friend Gay. Also there are descriptions of nature, not subtle in observation but full of music and delicacy; and they precede those of Dyer and Thomson. Some of the songs in the *Gentle Shepherd*, like the ever-fresh 'My Peggy is a young thing,' have the true popular quality. But Allan Ramsay's dealings with lyric are not all clear or satisfactory. He rehandled the text of many pieces without showing how much of the result was his own. And the special students of the subject agree that his service as a preserver and transmitter, signal as it was, contrasts, not only in quality but in kind, with that of Burns. 'In fact,' says one historian,[2] 'in "purifying" the old songs, he generally transmuted them into very homely and ordinary productions.'

This comment applies above all to the *Tea-Table Miscellany* (1724-32), a medley of pieces old and new, some popular, some

by Ramsay, some by other known poets ; some of the old ones being untraceably disguised and altered, and all put together with little or no clue to the procedure. It was a precious treasury nevertheless, and spread the knowledge and love of native song more than any other book before Burns. During these years Ramsay also published the *Evergreen* (1724-7), a body of old poems chosen mainly from the Bannatyne manuscripts, and then almost unremembered. This was another great service, if only for its reproductions of Dunbar, the greatest of the ancients. But here also Ramsay played the fox ; he included the *Vision*, that remarkable and sustained fabrication of his own, a kind of Jacobite complaint ; it is not known whether he had any kind of original to work upon. It is often said, with some justice, that his work as a rescuer and transmitter was of more note than his own verse ; but his rich and varied, though fickle, poetical faculty need not be questioned. Altogether Ramsay, though much of his best work was unknown or strange to Southern ears, must be regarded as one of the true founders, or precursors, of the new poetry.

II

Ramsay's associate and contributor, William Hamilton of Bangour [1] (1704-1754) is a somewhat disappointing poet, except for his one beautiful and universally-known piece, the *Braes of Yarrow*. This, like many other of his verses, appeared in the *Tea-Table Miscellany* ; its musical plaint, with the device of the repeated word (' Much I rejoiced that waeful waeful day ') is sustained to the end. Hamilton's other songs are tuneful too, but otherwise not out of the common. He has one vigorous narrative, in heroic couplets, the *Maid of Gallowshiels*, relating a contest of pipers in which the maid, who is judge, prefers the loser for herself. Hamilton was also a scholar, and is said to have been the first to put a piece of Homer into English blank verse. An earlier William Hamilton, of Gilbertfield, known for his elegy on the greyhound, *Bonnie Heck*, had been a friend and inspirer of Ramsay, with whom he exchanged easy epistles in the usual six-line stanza—a form that became as natural to a Scot as the heroic couplet to an Englishman.

The ' vernacular revival ' thus begun produced much verse ; but its fruits, until the appearance of Fergusson, are disappointing. Amid the crowd, there is a scanty line of writers, each of whom wrote one or two lyrics that have lived. These keep up the old tradition, and swell the mass of floating poetry that was

to be examined, used, and wrought up by Burns. Most of the good pieces are familiar in the anthologies.[1] Chief among them are the *Auld Robin Gray* of Lady Anne Barnard, born Lindsay ; Jean Elliot's *Flowers of the Forest*, in melodious pathetic Scots ; the poem in English with the same title by Mrs. Alison Cockburn, born Rutherford, ' I 've seen the smiling Of fortune beguiling,' more conventional in diction, but also a true song ; and the ringing and riotous *Tullochgorum* (1776) of John Skinner. Not in Scots at all, though written by a Scot, is the best of the lyrics attributed to Michael Bruce [2] (1746-1767), the *Cuckoo*. The ' rural seat ' and the ' vocal vale ' are hallmarks of the diction ; but several of the verses are dateless as well as beautiful :

> Sweet bird ! thy bower is ever green,
> Thy sky is ever clear ;
> Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
> No winter in thy year !

The native experts are still divided as to the authorship, and some of them credit the *Cuckoo* to the Rev. John Logan (1748-1788), who was a poet in his own right as well as a philosophically-minded divine. Logan in 1770 published his friend Bruce's poems, with an ambiguously worded preface to the effect that verses by other hands were also included, no names being attached. In his own *Poems* (1781) he inserted, and claimed, the *Cuckoo* ; and he is charged with having stolen it. The evidence is very confused and cannot be reviewed here ; perhaps the best finding may be a Scottish one, of ' not proven ' rather than ' not guilty.' In any case, Logan could write ; and his own *Braes of Yarrow* (it seems to be safely his) still holds the ear. The moan of Yarrow stream is heard for more than a century, from the old *Dowie Dens of Yarrow*, which inspired Hamilton of Bangour, down to Wordsworth. Another ditty-maker was Alexander Ross [3] (1699-1784), whose *Helenore, or the Fortunate Shepherdess* (1768), a lengthy and homely romance of a pastoral order, written in the difficult ' Buchan ' speech, was much read by those who could understand it ; and his songs, such as ' Woo'd and married and a',' and *The Rock* [distaff] *and the wee pickle Tow*, were long in favour. There are also Jacobite ditties, such as Adam Skirving's *Johnnie Cope*, that gay jeer at the retreat from Prestonpans, and the *Lewie Gordon* of Alexander Geddes ; the cheery *Miller* (1751) by John Clerk of Penicuik ; and John Ewen's ' O weel may the boatie row,' praised by Burns ; in whom all these moods, gay or rollicking, of the Northern muse find expression. But there is no poet of

much compass between Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson [1] (1750-1774).

The honours paid, if not overpaid, to Fergusson by the generous Burns are well known, and also the forms and patterns of Fergusson—themselves traditional—which Burns had before him. The *Cotter's Saturday Night* is no doubt the more exalted poem ; but the *Farmer's Ingle*, after all, has more unity, is less Anglified, and less of a family sermon ; and it brings before us the children rejoicing to be frightened by a tale of bogles :

> In *rangles* round before the ingle's *lowe* [*rows—blaze*
> Frae gudame's mouth auld-warld tales they hear
> O' warlocks louping round the *wirrikow* ; [*scarecrow*
> O' ghaists that *win* in glen and kirkyard drear ; [*dwell*
> Whilk *touzles* a' their tap, and *gars* them shak wi' fear ! [*ruffles—makes*

Leith Races, *Planestanes and Causey*, and many other things, such as *Hallowfair*, furnished outlines, and hints, and flashes which Burns, with a full right and not hiding his debts, made his own and improved ; but these poems keep their independent value and accent. Fergusson, who died at twenty-four, has a remarkable range of mood, and in Scots is a sure executant. He has some of the mobility of Burns, and of his abandonment ; he is more especially a poet of the city ; of its drinking, and singing, and 'flyting,' and love-making, and humours. 'Edina,' *alias* 'Auld Reekie,' is Fergusson's heroine. He has a merry rhymed epistle to the dons of St. Andrews, suggesting that they should feast Dr. Johnson on haggis and a sheep's head. The *Daft Days*, the few wild days of revel at the year's end, give the true atmosphere of fiddling, dancing, and brandy-drinking. A demurer kind of satire is to be seen in *Braid Claith*, the Sabbath attire that makes the barber equal to his customers, and gives social promotion on the day of rest : 'In short, you may be what you please Wi' gude Braid Claith.' Fergusson's delicate lyrical faculty is seen in many songs ; his version of 'My ain kind dearie, O ! ' is perhaps the best.

His record, until the close, is not a gloomy one. He was a precocious reader and rhymer : a gay and tricksy collegian, at St. Andrews and afterwards ; a hard worker, in the office of the Commissary Clerk ; and somewhat wild out of business hours, but not more so, it is pleaded, than his fellows. From 1771 onwards he wrote much in the *Weekly Magazine*, both in Scots and English. Most of his English verse may be neglected ; but he has, like some other Scots in this period, affinities with the Southern group of Shenstone and Jago with their thin sweet

melodies. He uses one of their measures in his graceful elegy on John Cunningham :

> For these were the haunts of his love,
> The sacred retreats of his ease,
> Where favourite Fancy would rove,
> As wanton, as light as the breeze.

In 1773 he published his *Poems*, not long before his collapse. Like Collins, he sank into melancholia, and so ended. There is nothing to show that Fergusson, had he lived, would have come into competition with Burns ; but he would, we may think, have been foremost in the band of writers, Mayne and Tannahill and Wilson, by whom Burns is surrounded. Returning to England with this chorus in our ears, ringing down the century, we are struck once more not only by the gulf between the two races but by the distinctive contribution of the Northern verse. It gives just what is often missing in the South : the frank, unashamed, direct utterance of passion, joyous or regretful—the voice of a people in whom poetry goes deeper down socially, and is more primitive and rash.

III

The chameleon character of poetry during this age is equally evident in the case of John Dyer (*c.* 1700-1758), who published his *Grongar Hill*[1] in 1726, the year of *Winter* ; the *Ruins of Rome* in 1740 ; and the *Fleece* in 1757. Dyer inverts the usual ' progress of poesy,' for the *Fleece* is a late instance of the blank-verse Georgic in the style of Milton, while *Grongar Hill* is a very early, surprising, and delightful poem of landscape. Born in Carmarthenshire, Dyer was a Celt, and he also had some practice in painting : two advantages that are not less clearly seen in his *Country Walk*, a fit companion to *Grongar Hill*. His short rhymes well suit his nimble and lightsome style. He was in orders, and held various cures in England ; and he is moved to preach a little, but is by no means markedly professional ; and he can put new life into a common thought :

> A little rule, a little sway,
> A sunbeam in a winter's day,
> Is all the proud and mighty have,
> Between the cradle and the grave.

Dyer's strength is in the presentation of colour, of wide prospects, and of vivid country detail. *Grongar Hill* describes an open and

tranquil view seen from a low mountain-top, with 'old castles' and 'trees unnumbered,' with

> a long and level lawn,
> On which a dark hill, steep and high,
> Holds and charms the wandering eye,

and with 'woody vallies warm and low.' Quiet dwells here, not in courts,

> And often, by the murmuring rill,
> Hears the thrush, while all is still,
> Within the groves of Grongar Hill.

A weaker, and probably earlier, draft of the poem contains an image that is not in the familiar version :

> Each watery face bears pictured woods and skies,
> Where, as the surface curls, when breezes rise,
> Faint fairy earthquake trembles to the eyes.

In the *Country Walk* Dyer descends to the vale, spends a day wandering, with *L'Allegro* running in his head, lies on the moss under an oak, and watches the changing hours; coming, I think, even nearer than in *Grongar Hill* to a true poetic vision, because more concrete in his perceptions. There is one admirable picture :

> An old man's smoky nest I see,
> Leaning on an aged tree,
> Whose willow walls, and furzy brow,
> A little garden sway below :
> Thro' spreading beds of blooming green,
> Matted with herbage sweet and clean,
> A vein of water limps along,
> And makes them evergreen and young.
> Here he puffs upon his spade
> And digs up cabbage in the shade :
> His tattered rags are sable brown
> His beard and hair are hoary grown ;
> The dying sap descends apace
> And leaves a withered hand and face.

The *Ruins of Rome*, inspired by a visit to the city, speak much less to the eye and ear, though Dyer listens to the 'musically-falling founts' and watches the 'radiant aqueducts' with their 'innumerable arches.' He gives, in easy style, the fresh but obvious reflections of the tourist, and recites the poetical and historical associations. The sentiment faintly anticipates one of Gibbon's greatest chapters; and, as in an earlier traveller, Du Bellay, a suitable melancholy is inspired. 'How sweet thy diapason, Melancholy!' There is much more life in the four

long books of the *Fleece*, which was commended by Wordsworth. The uses of tar and raddle, the process of dyeing, and the world-traffic in wool, might seem to be ominous themes for a poet. 'The two common sorts of rams described'; 'all pastures improvable, exemplified in the drainage of Bedford Level.' But there is abundance of spirit and happy detail in this thoroughly English Georgic: an enthusiasm not only for the commerce of 'Albion,' but for her climate of 'white-winged snow, and cloud, and pearly rain.' Dyer has a marked sympathy with animals; he sees the 'long tinkling train of slow-paced steeds,' with their packs, in Airedale; and notes that for the sick sheep, 'deep in spungy grass The oldest carpet is the warmest lair And soundest.' This way of portraying homely things prepares us for the accurate drawing of Cowper. There were other Georgics of the same order, meanwhile, such as Christopher Smart's *Hop-Garden* (1752), and the *Sugar-Cane* (1764) of Dr. James Grainger (? 1721-1766). This work, which reflects Grainger's minute and prosaic observations in the West Indies, provoked Johnson, in conversation, to plan out *The Cabbage-Garden, a Poem* ('the Scotch had no cabbages till Oliver Cromwell's soldiers introduced them'); but he thought the opening of Grainger's *Ode to Solitude* (1755) 'very noble.' It is sonorous and conventional; but the lines (always after *L'Allegro*) on the 'upland airy shades' to which Solitude retires in the morning, have some poetry in them. Grainger was the translator of Tibullus; and his correspondence with Percy shows that he was a friendly soul, zealous in good offices.

IV

The scanty, scintillating verse of Matthew Green (1696-1737) is something of a survival, or rather what biologists call a 'sport,' in the time of George the Second. Green came of Nonconformist parents, and was an officer in the Customs; and in 1732 he paid a playful tribute to the *Grotto* built by Queen Caroline in Richmond and guarded by her thresher-versifier Stephen Duck. The measure, which is Green's favourite one and is used by him both in the *Spleen* (1737) and in his lines on Barclay's *Apology for the Quakers*, is that of Samuel Butler. But there is a fresh tune in the familiar Hudibrastic couplets, and a much more good-tempered whimsicality than is commanded by that satirist; a vein, moreover, of sudden original fancy, which now and then rises to true imagination. In the *Grotto* there is a sketch of Delia moping like a 'sick linnet':

I see the favourite curls begin
(Disused to toilet discipline)
To quit their post, lose their smart air,
And grow again like common hair;
And tears, which frequent kerchiefs dry,
Raise a red circle round the eye;
And, by this bur [? blur] about the moon,
Conjecture more ill weather soon.

The *Spleen*, in short compass and with a swift discharge of light artillery, sets forth humorously Green's preferences and aversions, and his chosen scheme of life. He too has his country instincts, although it may be asked whether they are not partly founded on a devotion to Horace. In any case, the long passage opening with the words

Two hundred pounds, half-yearly paid,
Annuity securely made;
A farm some twenty miles from town,
Small, tight, salubrious, and my own,

is the most perfect picture that we have of the Sabine farm transplanted to England,

Where odorous plants in evening fair
Breathe all around ambrosial air.

All this is imagined as a cure for the 'spleen'; and the spleen,[1] or 'hyp,' or *ennui*, or boredom, is the malady that we have seen besetting Horace Walpole, Selwyn, and other patricians: the *day-mare*, as Green calls it, upon which he proposes not to 'write a treatise,' but to ruminate aloud in a serviceable style. Already the *Tatler* and Pope had recognised this ailment; and a learned physician, Dr. Richard Browne, in his *Medicina Musica* (1729), had analysed the 'spleen, or vapours.' The *Spectator* (No. 134) had recommended a course of poetry as a purge; and Johnson defines the spleen as 'hypochondriacal vapours.' In the course of the century it came to be recognised as a peculiarly British institution, being defined in the *Dictionary* of the French Academy (1798) as 'ennui de toutes choses, maladie hypocondriaque propre aux Anglais.' Green's medicines are various: exercise, mirth, life on the farm, and the satirical observation of our fellow-men. Green produces much quaint and flashing epigram, and rapidly reviews the social farce; almost every line, as in *Hudibras*, needs a commentator:

A miser starving to be rich,
The prior of Newgate's dying speech,
A jointured widow's ritual state,
Two Jews disputing *tête-à-tête*,

> New almanacs composed by seers,
> Experiments on felons' ears,
> Disdainful prudes, who ceaseless ply
> The superb muscle of the eye,
> A coquet's April-weather face . . .

He evidently revolted from his upbringing, for he assails the ultra-Protestants

> Who their ill-tasted home-brewed prayer
> To the state's mellow forms prefer;

and he also sallies out against bubbling 'projectors,' 'lean politicians,' and critics who invent rules to cramp the poets. At the end he drops his raillery and utters a kind of deistic confession of faith, offering to his Maker only 'mute praise, and humble negatives'; and throws out one of those heresies which to millions of Orientals are axioms:

> A stranger into life I 'm come;
> Dying may be our going home;
> Transported here by angry fate,
> *The convicts of a prior state,*
> Hence, I no anxious thoughts bestow
> On matters I can never know.

In his lines on Barclay's *Apology* Green describes the tenets of the Society of Friends with a mixture of affection and irony, ending, somewhat ambiguously, 'Like you I think, but cannot live.' We should like to have heard more from so original and recalcitrant a mind; but perhaps he said all he had to say; and, like Pope, he says it in the fewest and keenest words.

V

The lovers of poetry, therefore, should allow some praise to those who shine in any branch of it, and only range them into classes according to that species in which they shine.

So writes William Shenstone[1] (1714-1763), in one of those essays which are full of pointed sayings on his own craft; and the words read like a diffident plea for himself. No doubt he does not always know in what 'species' he is born to shine. When he tries, as in his *Judgment of Hercules* (1741) or in his *Economy*, to be solemn and didactic, he is but paying toll to the drearier fashions of the hour. His strength is in his lighter verse, with its nice, exact, and unambitious melody, and with its simple pathos, which inclines indeed towards the 'silly-sooth' but is saved by its lurking humour. Shenstone first

made his mark by his chief poem, the *Schoolmistress*, which exists in three separate and successively ampler forms (1737, 1742, 1748). The last one appeared in his friend Dodsley's *Collection*, as well as many of his other verses; and Dodsley, after Shenstone's death, published his essays, a number of his letters, and also his poems. Dodsley further printed his own *Description of the Leasowes*, the famous estate at Halesowen, near Birmingham, where Shenstone spent most of his days, devoting his taste and means to the business of making a quiet midland landscape pictorial. Here he was the centre of a band of literary persons who exchanged letters and visits, honestly admired one another, and lived in a mild *aura* of artistic sensibility. Lady Luxborough,[1] whose letters to Shenstone are in print, represented the 'quality.' One feature of the Leasowes was the series of tributary inscriptions, in Latin or English, which the poet-proprietor sprinkled at suitable points of view. There was one to Thomson, whom Shenstone in a letter terms 'that sweet-souled bard'; one to Somervile, one to Richard Jago, the pleasant poet of the *Blackbird*, and one to Richard Graves, author of the *Spiritual Quixote*; one also to Dodsley himself:

> Come then, my friend! thy sylvan taste display;
> Come, hear thy Faunus tune his rustic lay.

The words are not very apposite to the busy publisher, who was careful to include them in his *Description*. These names will give some idea of Shenstone's circle and affinities. He was also a friend of Percy, and their letters are of much interest. Many are concerned with the projected *Reliques*. The poet had seen the 'large folio MS. of ballads,' and states,

> I was also to have assisted him in selecting and rejecting, and in fixing upon the best readings; but my illness broke off our correspondence.

Shenstone had no little critical gift, and a true feeling for popular verse. 'Such pieces,' he writes, 'contain the true chemical spirit or essence of poetry.' The clearest picture of him as a man is given by Dodsley, and by Richard Graves in his *Recollections* (1788). What with money troubles and a too anxious temperament, he chafed at times in his retreat; but the reader of Johnson's *Life* must be warned that his woes are there exaggerated. In any case, he had not merely expressed his artistic gift in words; like Voltaire's hero, though in another spirit, he had 'cultivated his garden.'

The Leasowes, with its studious disposition of views and vistas; with its 'ruinated walls' (the English is Dodsley's); its woods always 'hanging,' and its paths always 'winding'; its 'serpentine water,' and its 'swelling lawns,' interspersed 'with single or clumps of oaks at agreeable distances':—the Leasowes, with all this, was one of the most conspicuous and elaborate bids for manufactured landscape that the age produced. Shenstone shared with William Kent, and with Lancelot, or 'Capability,' Brown, in the revolt against the beautiful formal garden, which we rightly associate with the tradition of Versailles and Le Nôtre, but which was also an indigenous and ancient form of applied art. Like his fellows, he had a foolish horror of the symmetrical and rectilineal; and a clue to the new conception of the 'picturesque' can be found in the words, here italicised, from his long essay upon *Gardening*:

> Landskip should contain variety enough to *form a picture upon canvas*; and this is no bad test, I think; the landskip painter is the gardener's best master. The eye requires a sort of balance here; but not so as to *encroach upon probable nature.*

That is, nature must be altered and 'composed'; yet not too much, not on any account into scenes where 'each alley has his brother'; but enough to remind us of Claude or Salvator Rosa in their milder moods. Hence we introduce (to revert to the language of Dodsley) now a 'pretty circular landscape,' and now a 'scene at once cool, gloomy, solemn, and sequestered.' Some human devices, however, must be eschewed; and it is startling to be told by Shenstone that 'hedges, appearing as such, are universally bad; they discover art in nature's province.'

Yet all this contriving is neither contemptible nor irrelevant to poetry. The effect is an agreeable artifice, with a beauty of its own, as some of our modern parks still testify. And it bears its part in the revival of the imagination. Dodsley works the word *romantic* hard, and applies it to the dingle where Shenstone had inscribed one of his neatest lyrics,

> Here, in cool grot and mossy cell,
> We rural Fays and Fairies dwell.

In the same decade, of the sixties, came Hurd, with his defence of the 'fairy way of writing,' and Percy, with his supernatural ballads; and the notion of non-human powers, whether gay or sinister, was rapidly being attached once more to that of 'romance.' Also we seem to trace in the poets a frequent if

unconscious recollection of pictures; in Collins, for instance, with his 'dim-discovered spires,' and with his Melancholy in her 'wild sequestered seat.' It is singular how little of this kind of vision Shenstone puts into his own verse. He deals in conventions like the 'cool Aonian glade' and the 'flowery sweets of May.' He has, in fact, no landscape at all and nothing is arranged; his flowers and herbs, the vetch and the bean, the marjoram and the lavender with its 'spikes of azure bloom,' are seen singly, and in the *Schoolmistress* [1] are so enumerated, in Spenser's manner.

This poem, which contains, says the author, 'a deformed portrait of my old schooldame Sarah Lloyd,' rose at once above the mob of contemporary imitations. It was not, and is not, obscured by the *Castle of Indolence* (1748), where a different aspect of the *Faerie Queene* is reproduced. Indeed, Shenstone does not so much parody the sage and serious poet, as catch and rival, and that with grace and brilliancy, the strain of his more sportive passages. He finds a 'very singular pleasure' in Spenser's 'simplicity and obsolete phrase,' which thus afford 'the greatest scope for a ludicrous imitation.' He also feels that the concluding alexandrine has an 'extreme majesty.' The burlesque is thus of the most affectionate kind; and as it goes on, Shenstone seems to be carried away by his author; [2] pure poetry comes more and more to usurp on mimicry, when the children are loosed from school and from the fear of the birchen rod:

> But now Dan Phoebus gains the middle sky,
> And Liberty unbars her prison door,
> And like a rushing torrent out they fly,
> And now the grassy cirque has covered o'er
> With boist'rous revel-rout and wild uproar.
> A thousand ways in wanton rings they run;
> Heaven shield their short-lived pastimes, I implore!
> For well may Freedom, erst so dearly won,
> Appear to British elf more gladsome then the sun.

The *Schoolmistress*, as we have seen, was in Shenstone's mind from his youth up. He gives a clear account of the nature of Spenser's growing attraction for him: he had read the *Faerie Queene* before 1737, but had 'cared not to proceed'; and in 1742 he writes:

> Pope's *Alley* made me consider him ludicrously; and in that light, I think, one may read him with pleasure. I am now, from trifling and laughing at him, really in love with him.

The poem was most carefully revised; and in particular, those

stanzas on the herbs, to which we may fairly attribute the 'mickle rare perfume' of which the poet speaks, were only added in the final version.

VI

Shenstone's lyrics may be divided into ballads, whether humorous or grievous, and into songs properly so called. One of his models for the pathetic ditty is the popular broadside, which relates some recent tragedy and is hawked to sell, so that it may draw easy tears from simple readers. Of this kind is *Jemmy Dawson*, another excellent piece of mimicry. We must smile at lines like 'O Dawson, monarch of my heart,' or, 'and mangled was that beauteous breast' (namely Jemmy's), yet they need not be derided; for they are in the popular vein. And the pathos, which is genuine, in

> My death, my death alone, can shew
> The pure, the lasting love I bear,

is just what the homely muse tries, if usually in vain, to achieve. In the satirical ballad of manners, Shenstone has left one small masterpiece, 'From Lincoln to London rode forth our young squire.' The theme is the common one of the town lady who has to quit her pleasures and debts and to marry a small country gentleman. In the *Modern Fine Lady* by Soame Jenyns, already quoted, the dame

> condescends to listen to his prayer,
> And marries him at last in mere despair;

while Shenstone's luckier heroine gets away to Gretna Green:

> But the while honest Harry despaired to succeed,
> A coach and a coronet trail'd her to Tweed.

What a living poet[1] aptly calls Shenstone's 'talent for delicate extravagance' is well seen in the longest of his lyrics, *A Pastoral Ballad, in Four Parts.* It bears the legend *arbusta humilesque myrtos.* The conscious and contented humility of the poet's muse is here well revealed, and well rewarded. Corydon, no doubt, moves in the world of china shepherds; and yet his sorrows, like those of Pierrot, though taken ever so lightly, have a sort of poignancy, and the tune to which he pipes is not merely artificial. 'Pastoral poetry, in my opinion,' Shenstone writes to Percy, 'should exhibit almost *naked sentiment.*'

Alas! from the day that we met,
What hope to an end for my woes?
When I cannot endure to forget
The glance that undid my repose.
Yet time may diminish the pain:
The flower, and the herb, and the tree,
Which I rear'd for her pleasure in vain,
In time may have comfort for me.

Shenstone's ear for melody of this kind is unfailing. We may be impatient, like Dr. Johnson, with his little world of nymphs and swains; but we must acknowledge that all is in perfect keeping, and that such verse has rarely been better done. The same is true of his handful of songs. 'There is a certain flimsiness of poetry,' he observes, 'which seems expedient in a song.' We are not, then, to look for poetic ambition or energy like that of Akenside. The verse of elegant compliment, with a touch of feeling, suited Shenstone. It had never died out since Restoration times, and in his hands it seems to recover its lost innocence and its former finish. *Flavia*, and *Valentine's Day*, and *Roxana*,

When bright Roxana treads the green
In all the pride of dress and mien,

all show that power of avoiding commonness while saying almost nothing, which is the salt of such compositions. The familiar lines *Written in an Inn at Henley* are sharper in tone, and were written after a tiff with a friend; they betray the sense of solitude which sometimes visits Shenstone, restless amidst his ordered landscape.

The frontispiece to the *Essays on Men and Manners* exhibits a stout nude Apollo stolidly garlanding the stolid poet; and he, clad in Bacchic furs and nondescript nether garments, is playing on a mysterious musical instrument taller than himself. The essays themselves are devoid of pose, and stand out amongst the endless imitations of the *Spectator*. An easy writer, Shenstone leans to the 'detached thought,' and may perhaps have studied the French practitioners of the *pensée*. Many a sentence shows the free mind of an indolent observer:

'There seem near as many people that want passion, as want reason.'—'A man sooner finds out his own foibles in a stranger, than any other foibles.'—'Poetry and consumption are the most flattering diseases.'

Above all, Shenstone's scattered remarks on literature deserve to be collected. We find him, like Joseph Warton, protesting

against the still current over-estimate of Pope. His language certainly varies, for at one time he is charmed by the *Essay on Man*, saying,

> I think no other English poet ever brought so much sense into the same number of lines with equal smoothness, ease, and poetical beauty.

But he had long had his misgivings ; although, during the great man's lifetime, so he tells us not very courageously, he had not cared to speak out ; and now, when Pope has departed, he is bolder :

> Let us consider Parnassus rather as a republic than as a monarchy. . . . In smoothness of verse perhaps he has been equalled ; in regard to invention, excelled. . . . Mr. Pope is much more witty, and less simple, than his own Horace appears in any of his writings.

Shenstone anticipates Charles Lamb in his observations on the ' genteel ' style of writing, of which he considers Shaftesbury to be the master, while Pope and Swift come next in merit. He also uses the epithet strangely, in commending the effect of what he styles a ' genteel abruption,' meaning a sudden break, or drop, by way of climax. His examples are excellent, and are chosen quite in the spirit of Longinus. One is ' Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound ' ; and the other, ' Now Barabbas was a robber.' But Shenstone is more often concerned with the sound and technique of verse. Like Edgar Allan Poe afterwards, he notices the ' singular pathos ' of the words *no more*, ' reminding us at once of past pleasure and of the future exclusion of it.' This is the classic *desiderium*. He finds that ' the first line of Virgil seems to patter like a hailstorm—*Tityre, tu patulae*, etc.' He detects the beauty of a ' dactyl ' in the eighth and ninth places of a heroic line, such as

> And pikes, the tyrants of the *watery* plains.

Substitute *liquid*, and the effect is gone. Finally, he supplies what used to be called a ' chokepear,' to all those among us who are exercised over the science of metre :

> It is no doubt extremely possible to form an English prosody ; but to a good ear it were almost superfluous, and to a bad one useless ; this last being, I believe, never joined with a poetical genius.

One more instance may be given of Shenstone's alertness of perception. Like so many, he was carried away, at any rate at

first, by Macpherson's 'Ossian'; [1] and in a letter of 1761 he puts his finger on the cause of its popularity:

It seems to be a very favourable era for the appearance of such irregular poetry. The taste of the age, so far as regards plan and style, seems to have been carried to its utmost height, as may appear in the works of Akenside, Gray's *Odes* and *Churchyard Verses*, and Mason's *Monody* and *Elfrida*. The public has seen all that art can do, and they want the more striking efforts of wild, original, enthusiastic genius. . . . Here is, indeed, pure original genius! the very quintessence of poetry; a few drops of which, properly managed, are enough to give a flavour to quart bottles.

No formal definition of early 'romanticism' can tell us as much as these few sentences: 'the public has seen all that art can do,' and it wants 'wild original genius.' Shenstone's taste extended to much bolder kinds of poetry than his own, which he considered to be chiefly trifles. He would never have believed that *Fingal* and *Temora* would be forgotten, while the *Schoolmistress* and the *Pastoral Ballad* would live.

VII

The name of John Cunningham (1729-1773) is ignored in the *Lives of the Poets*; and it is little to say that he deserved admission better than Blackmore or Yalden. His work, a small but precious relic, is to be found in the catacombs of Anderson and Chalmers. Some of it has appeared in recent anthologies, but it has not been reprinted as a whole. Cunningham was an Irishman who made a hit with his farce, *Love in a Mist*, but who became an unsuccessful wandering player. He began to publish verse about 1762; his collected *Poems, chiefly Pastoral*, appeared in 1766, and were reissued with additions in 1771. Some of his simple and tuneful meditations remind us of Cowper, such as the lines 'written about three weeks before his death':

My sunshine of youth is no more!
My mornings of pleasure are fled!
'Tis painful my fate to endure,
A pension supplies me with bread! . . .

Thus, lost to each worldly desire,
And scorning all riches, all fame,
I quietly hope to retire,
When Time shall the summons proclaim.

There is the same sort of finish in the whimsical *Pomona, a Pastoral on the Cyder Bill being Passed* :

When Bacchus began to repine,
With patience I bore his abuse,
He said that I plundered his vine,
He said that I pilfered his juice.

I know the proud drunkard denies
That trees of my culture should grow ;
But let not the traitor advise ;
He comes from the climes of your foe.

Cunningham, like many others, studied and imitated Gray, but it was in no servile fashion ; and there are stanzas in his *Elegy on a Pile of Ruins* that would have lived in the general memory had they been signed by Gray :

The relics of a mitred saint may rest,
Where, mouldering in the niche, his statue stands ;
Now nameless as the crowd that kissed his vest,
And craved the benediction of his hands. . . .

The lizard, and the lazy lurking bat,
Inhabit now, perhaps, the painted room,
Where the sage matron and her maidens sat,
Sweet-singing at the silver-working loom.

Goldsmith, in one of his little books of extracts, remarks justly that this measure 'has the slowest movement of which our language is capable' ; and Cunningham has caught that movement. Usually he prefers a quicker one ; and by far his best piece is *Day, a Pastoral*, with its three sections on 'Morning,' 'Noon,' and 'Evening.' There is nothing to equal the 'dim-discovered spires' of Collins, or his 'sallow Autumn' ; but there is a sharper edge to the imagery than in either Gray or Collins. Not only the weary ploughman is seen, but his 'giantlike' and 'lengthened' shadow. Cunningham's 'hermit howlet' does not merely mope, but

peeps
From the barn, or twisted brake ;
And the blue mist slowly creeps,
Curling, on the silver lake.

Some rude sketches to accompany *Day*, which were published in 1854, explain another verse : a high-roofed country mansion is shown with the woods in steep ascent behind it :

Where the rising forest spreads,
Shelter for the lordly dome !
To their high-built airy beds,
See the rooks returning home !

Cunningham can also surprise us when he attempts the ampler kind of lyric. In a footnote to his *Pastoral Hymn to Janus on the Birthday of the Queen* he explains that 'the above little poem was written on supposition that Her Majesty's birthday was *really* in the month of January.' Queen Charlotte, in any case, might be proud of the tribute, which has a certain splendour:

To Janus, gentle shepherds, raise a shrine:
His honours be divine!
And as to mighty Pan with homage bow:
To him, the virgin troop shall tribute bring;
Let him be hailed like the green-liveried Spring,
Spite of the wintry storms that stain his brow. . . .

Could the soft Spring with all her sunny showers,
The frolic nurse of flowers!
Or flaunting Summer, flushed in ripened pride,
Could they produce a finished sweet so rare:
Or, from his golden stores, a gift so fair,
Say, has the fertile Autumn e'er supplied?

Henceforward let the hoary month be gay
As the white-hawthorned May!
The laughing goddess of the Spring disowned,
Her rosy wreaths shall on *his* brows appear;
Old Janus, as he leads, shall fill the year,
And the less fruitful Autumn be dethroned.

Keats, surely, would have liked these stanzas. The short verse of six syllables strikes in with effect, as it does in his own ode *To Pan*; and we remember how Dante thought that in Italian the line of seven is the next in nobility to the line of eleven, and best diversifies a *canzone*. Cunningham's other poems, like his *Miller* and his *Landscape*, are also uncommon; and his ditties to various damsels, *Kate of Aberdeen*, *Kitty Fell*, and *Fanny of the Dale*, deserve to be rescued.

The figure of another playactor-poet, Cuthbert Shaw [1] (1738-1771), who was also a schoolmaster and a journalist, is seen behind those of Churchill and Lyttelton, who appear to be his chief poetic models. There is much vehement and vigorous declamation, often sinking into doggerel, of the *Race* (1765-6), 'by Mercurius Spur, Esq.' This is a kind of pocket *Dunciad*, and a museum of allusions, for the most part unfriendly, to the critics, booksellers, and authors of the hour. Smollett and the *Critical Review*, with whom Shaw had squabbled, are paid in their own coin. Among the victims are Macpherson and Mallet, the scurrilous Kenrick, the poetaster Duck, and a

horde of yet smaller scribblers. There is a curious picture of Johnson,

> unblest with outward grace,
> His rigid morals stamped upon his face,

frightening babes and also the Muses with his ferocious appearance, and yet reserved for fame as a moralist. Shaw can point a couplet; but a more human strain is heard in his *Monody* on his wife and in the *Evening Address to a Nightingale*, a lament for his infant daughter. Grief, like funeral costume and custom, has its fashions; and when, as in this instance, it is genuine, we can no more criticise the stiff envelope of language, through which the poetic accent can just be discerned, than we can the black gloves and plumes of another age. There is at least one melodious verse of Shaw's which needs no such plea, and in which he compares the mourner to a captive bird singing:

> Thus the poor bird, by some disastrous fate
> Caught and imprisoned in a lonely cage,
> Torn from its native fields, and dearer mate,
> Flutters awhile, and spends its little rage:
> But, finding all its efforts weak and vain,
> No more it pants and rages for the plain;
> Moping awhile, in sullen mood,
> Droops the sweet mourner—but, ere long,
> Prunes its light wings, and pecks its food,
> And meditates the song:
> Serenely sorrowing, breathes its piteous case,
> And with its plaintive warblings saddens all the place.

VIII

Before proceeding to Gray and Collins, to Chatterton and Smart, it is well to warn ourselves that these poets, who did the rarest work of the time, are not entirely representative. They drew from the 'springs of Helicon,' from the Psalms, or Pindar, or the Roman ode, or the older English masters. But outside such influences, or little touched by them, is a mass of minor lyric [1] of a greyer, quieter, less aspiring kind, and often perfect in its way: a lost handicraft, with subtleties of its own. We can turn with some relief from a course of Pindarics or of odes on Simplicity and Adversity to such a tinkling ditty as this:

> And you, my companions so dear,
> Who sorrow to see me betrayed,
> Whatever I suffer, forbear,
> Forbear to accuse the false maid.

'Though through the wide world I should roam,
'Tis in vain from my fortune to fly;
'Twas hers to be false and to change,
'Tis mine to be constant and die.

The writer, Nicholas Rowe, does not mean what he says; but how pleasing, and how sensible, are his real playfulness, and his mock despair! The very metre belies his professions. The best, if not the only, critic of such work is the good anthologist. Certainly, he must be a connoisseur of the tea, rather than of the wine, of poetry; and he must insist with Oriental punctilio on the elegance and perfection of the service. To be satisfied, he must turn over scores of forgotten authors, who cannot be recited here. Many of them live only by a single copy of verses; many have no name or headstone at all, like the dead in Gray's *Elegy*; and they seldom talk of fame, or expect it. Their work shows the greatest variety of theme, but also a certain community of pattern.

We may try to define the general form, the 'pure idea,' of this modest kind of lyric, as it flourished during the eighteenth century. The words, above all, are to be pitched neither too high nor too low; but it does no harm if they have a gay swagger a little above the occasion. They should say themselves, with little inversion or special 'diction,' and without any eccentricity. All is safe if they run like the speech of 'natural, easy Suckling.' The opening phrase should have an arresting rhythm; but the end matters even more than the beginning, and may well contain a sting, or at least a turn of epigram. The whole piece is short, and what Aristotle calls comprehensible at a glance. The lines, too, are better kept short, of eight syllables or six; and the best effects seem to be given by stanzas of from four to six lines; although the couplet of eight may serve very well, and so may the heroic couplet if there is not too much of it. In this lapidary art, the cutting must be without flaw, and every speck of dust removed. These seem to be some of the canons, as suggested by the best examples; and it remains to describe a few of the practitioners.

The verse of gallantry and compliment is abundant and good, and naturally often has a mischievous point to it; and here the dividing line of 1730 has no meaning. There is a clear and continuous tradition down from Restoration and Revolution times, which persists through the reigns of Anne and George the First, losing perhaps its original 'something of the sea,' but also dropping its more cynical and callous tone. Even as the Hanoverian age went on, the delightful art of rhyming an empty

compliment, of turning a smiling or smirking Cupid in ivory, never perished. The Florellas, Cynthias, and Cyndaraxas of Walsh and Congreve had a long lease of life. Johnson's acquaintance, Mrs. Mary Jones,[1] of Oxford, whom he used to call the 'Chantress,' has a sprightly epitaph on an unknown Stella, in which there is a pleasing echo of the older sort of sonorous extravagance :

> From thought to thought incessant hurled,
> Her scheme was but—to rule the world.
> At morn, she won it by her eyes ;
> At night, when beauty, sickening, sighs,
> Like the mad Macedonian, cried,
> 'What, no more worlds, ye gods ! '—and died.

Now and then this sort of verse, where there can be no question of personal passion, wins a kind of *simulacrum* of it through sheer skill in rhythm. The *Rosebud*, addressed by Dr. William Broome to the Lady Jane Wharton, 'Queen of fragrance, lovely rose,' is of this kind, and shows how long the ancient cadence lasted. The conclusion, at least the first four lines of it, would not be easy to date, if we did not know that Broome was Pope's coadjutor, or employee, in translating the *Odyssey* :

> Now Helen lives alone in fame,
> And Cleopatra 's but a name.
> Time must indent that heavenly brow,
> And thou must be, what they are now.
> This moral to the fair disclose,
> Queen of fragrance, lovely rose.

Real love-poetry, of the impassioned kind, and honest, does not abound in this period ; but there is one piercing utterance, which is now becoming well known, Mrs. Frances Greville's *Prayer for Indifference*. This is no Horatian tribute to the *via media* ; indifference is to be the sovereign cure for a mind that is racked by love and craving for peace. I cannot parallel this outcry in eighteenth-century verse. The execution of the piece is unequal ; but the mood is sustained :

> Then take this treacherous sense of mine,
> Which dooms me still to smart ;
> Which pleasure can to pain refine,
> To pain, new pangs impart.

and the ending runs :

> And what of life remains for me,
> I 'll pass in sober ease
> Half-pleased, contented I will be,
> Content but half to please :

that is, manifestly *not* contented at all, still less pleased. Cowper and others rejoined to this poem, in the name of the joy of life and of 'sweet Sensibility.' And there is a good deal of truly contented lyric, very unobtrusive, which recalls the atmosphere of the Primrose family. The cynical poetry of Charles's days had been mostly patrician in origin; but this newer kind suggests the letters and memoirs of the well-conditioned middle or professional class. It expresses, therefore, 'bourgeois sentiment,' and that without the unpleasant unction and mawkishness that leave their shiny trail on the page of *Pamela* or *Clarissa*. The 'angel in the house' is described with spirit and affection, if not with rapture. The writer does not expect rapture; but he is equally far from *ennui*, the spectre of Horace Walpole and his set. Neither is the verse tiresome. More than one example comes from the clergy.

> If to my lot a wife should fall,
> May friendship be our love,

temperately sings the Rev. John Free. But there is more heart in the anniversary lines of the Rev. Samuel Bishop, headmaster of Merchant Taylors' School, which he offers, accompanied by a second wedding ring, to his wife. Coventry Patmore was not the first to speak in this domestic strain; Mr. Bishop's ring is given

> with faith as sure,
> With ardour as intense, as pure,
> As when, amid the rites divine,
> I took thy troth, and plighted mine.

On other occasions Mrs. Bishop received, with suitable rhymes, a thimble, or a paste buckle, or the poet's own 'profile in shadow' (silhouette). The best of all these domestic tributes, the unsigned *Song to Winifreda*, is very well known, and appears in Percy's *Reliques*. It extols the 'life of reason,' which can be led by a happy couple with a modest pittance; and there is something gallant and universal in the conclusion:

> And when with envy Time transported
> Shall think to rob us of our joys,
> You 'll in your girls again be courted,
> And I 'll go wooing in my boys.

The *Song* came out in the *Miscellaneous Poems, by Several Hands*, 'published by David Lewis'[1] (1726), and is superscribed, most suspiciously, as a 'translation from the ancient British.' It would be pleasing to credit Lewis with this and some other pieces in the same notable volume; he admits that

he is among the authors, but carefully hides the clues. In another poem comes the noble verse:

> Beyond the reach of time or fate
> These graces should endure,
> Still, like the passion they create,
> Eternal, constant, pure.

In avowed imitation of this poem, and with an apt echo of its rhythm, John Gilbert Cooper (1723-1769) composed his 'elegy' entitled *A Father's Advice to his Son*, of which a few lines may be rescued here:

> Since, from an ancient race descended,
> You boast an unattainted blood,
> By yours be their fair fame attended,
> And claim, by birthright, to be good. . . .
>
> The princely pine, on hills exalted,
> Whose lofty branches cleave the sky,
> By winds, long braved, at last assaulted,
> Is headlong whirled in dust to lie;
>
> Whilst the mild rose, more safely growing
> Low in its unaspiring vale,
> Amidst retirement's shelter blowing,
> Exchanges sweets with every gale.

Cooper, like Gray, was an admirer of Jean-Baptiste-Louis Gresset, who is thought to have inspired the *Ode to Vicissitude*. He translated Gresset's *Ver-Vert, or the Nunnery Parrot*; and echoed his 'clear pipe,' as he calls it, in four *Epistles to his Friends in Town, from Aristippus in Retirement* (1757-8); keeping, too, the French octosyllabic couplets, with their 'unconfined return of the rhymes, and easiness of the diction.' Cooper is all for refined and lettered ease, and his mildly epicurean temper is not amiss after reading much ferocious invective and heavy didactics. He likes to sit with his light poets around him, near 'our Shenstone's mossy cell,'

> Or where the fair Deshoulières strays,
> Or Hammond and Pavilion dwell,
> And Gresset's gentle spirit roves,
> Surrounded by a group of Loves,
> With roses crowned and asphodel.

This contented life is most easily led in the country; and it is not only the well-known poets, the Dyers and Thomsons, who love the country and observe it. The sober note struck by Pomfret in his *Choice* is often repeated by artless writers. At intervals in the *Gentleman's Magazine* appeared verses, of a very

literal stamp, by the Thomas Brerewood who also wrote an unedifying tale, *Galfred and Juetta*, and who died in 1748 :

When the ways are so miry, that bogs they might seem,
And the axletree 's ready to break ;
While the waggoner whistles in stopping his team,
And claps the poor jades on the neck. . . .

In the night, when 'tis cloudy and rainy and dark,
And the labourers snore as they lie,
Not a noise to disturb us, unless the dog bark,
In the farm, or the village hard by.

The same actuality, with an added touch of grace, is found in the imperfect rhymes of Mrs. Mary Leapor [1] (1720-1746). She is said to have been a cookmaid, and was certainly the daughter of a gardener at Brackley in Northamptonshire. Her lines are redolent of the orchard and the herb-bed ; she celebrates the russets, the ' lovely Catherine pears ' and codlings in her domain :

But see, to emulate those cheeks of thine,
On yon fair tree the blushing nectarines shine ;
Beneath their leaves the ruddy peaches glow,
And the plump figs compose a gallant show.

Mary Leapor steeped herself in the verse of Pope, but used his rhythm for her own purpose when she wrote :

Within the banks soft water-cresses spring,
Where the pleased heron prunes his dabbled wing ;

and both his rhythm and his style disappear in lines like these :

'Tis true our parlour has an earthen floor,
The sides of plaster, and of elm the door ;
Yet the rubbed chest and table sweetly shines,
And the spread mint along the window climbs ;
An aged laurel keeps away the sun,
And two cool streams across the garden run.

There is the same sort of recording in the *Amwell* (1776) and the *Eclogues* of John Scott [2] the Quaker (1730-1783), who also made elegies in the manner of Gray; he prepares us for Cowper, and for Crowe's *Lewesdon Hill*, and also for Crabbe : he speaks of ' the walnut's gloomy breadth of boughs,' and of his garden :

Before my door the box-edged border lies,
Where flowers of mint and thyme and tansy rise ;
Along my wall the glowing stonecrop grows,
And the red houseleek on my broad thatch blows.

The ' return to nature,' always gathering strength, is well seen in these humble writers.

IX

The poetry of the hymn-book may be noted hereafter, in connection with the Wesley family (Ch. XVIII.); but there is also a body of grave, ethical, and sententious lyric, more or less definitely religious. Much of this is embodied in the ode, as in the case of Akenside, Collins, and Gray; much is in less ambitious measures; and some, again, is in the sonnet-form. The best known of the elegiac odes is the *Monody* (1747) of George Lord Lyttelton, upon his wife Lucy. The feeling is deep, but it is long drawn out, and the poem seldom rises into energy; there is not the point and concision of Lyttelton's song 'The heavy hours are almost past That part my love and me.' Of brief lyrics, perhaps the most perfect in this vein, and the most pagan in sentiment, is by David Lewis, which opens:

> No, not for those of women born,
> Not so unlike the die is cast;
> For, after all our vaunt and scorn,
> How very small the odds at last!

In the plainer style, Johnson's lines on Levett have outlived many an elaborate funeral wreath. It is uncertain whether he would have approved of the unclerical moralisings of the Rev. Charles Jenner, incumbent of Claybrook (a suggestive name); who owns indeed, officially, to an 'overruling power,' but who actually muses thus:

> Fate gives us line, we shift the scene,
> And jocund traverse to and fro;
> Pain, sickness, still will intervene;
> We feel the hook where'er we go.
>
> Awhile we sport, awhile lament,
> Fate checks the line, and we are gone,
> Dragged from our wonted element
> To distant climes, untried, unknown.

The sonnet,[1] a form predestined for grey reflections, begins to revive during this period after a long silence, and many examples have been catalogued; but with the exception of Gray's poem on West and a few by Thomas Warton they are still little known, and are often not worth knowing. Prentice-work, they prepare the way for Bowles and other practitioners, as these in their turn do for Coleridge and Wordsworth. Many are sprinkled through the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and there multiply after 1780. Many, again, of these, such as Cowper's lines on the rose 'that Mary to Anna conveyed,' are misnamed 'sonnets.' In

the true examples, the metre varies ; Spenser's 'linked music' is not uncommon ; but the usual structure is the Petrarchan, more or less exactly followed. Milton is the chief model ; and in his sonnets, it may be observed, Milton holds up for imitation a simpler and plainer, though not therefore an easier, style than he does in *Il Penseroso* or *Paradise Lost.* A kind of wraith of this style can be found in the most accomplished of the sonneteers, Thomas Edwards, the author of the *Canons of Criticism* (1747). To some later editions of that deadly and amusing assault on Warburton's edition of Shakespeare are appended forty-five sonnets, some new, some already in print. Some are ferocious, and are aimed at Warburton himself ; others blandly commend the quiet life which Edwards, a barrister who turned country gentleman, himself preferred. Two ('O ! master of the heart ! ') are addressed to his friend Richardson ; others to Lord Hardwicke, or to Heberden the good physician. One of the best (except for the monotony of rhyme in the octave) is to Matthew Barnard, the sexton of his parish ; and this specimen of Edwards's handiwork is not unworthy :

> Matthew, whose skilful hand and well-worn spade
> Shall soon be called to make the humble bed
> Where I at last shall rest my weary head,
> And, formed of dust, in dust again be laid ;
> Near by, not in, the church of God be made
> My clay-cold cell, and near the common tread
> Of passing friends, when, numbered with the dead,
> We 're equal all, and vain distinctions fade.
>
> The cowslip, violet, or the pale primrose
> Perhaps may chance to deck the verdant sward,
> Which twisted briar or hazel-band entwine :
> Symbols of life's soon-fading glories those— :
> Do thou the monumental hillock guard
> From trampling cattle, and the routing swine.

William Thompson, Scott of Amwell, Langhorne (who made versions from Petrarch), Benjamin Stillingfleet the botanist, and many more, occasionally practised the sonnet. William Julius Mickle, the translator of Camoens, has a stirring one on that poet, who was said to have begged his bread on the bridge at Alcantara ; but most of these poets tried to live on their memories of Milton, and the new inspiration had not yet come.

X

The verses, chiefly lyrical, that are prompted by *Musa jucunda* (who may also be *Musa proterva*) fall into three groups :

these are jovial ditties of sundry kinds; personal satires and skits; and parodies, or burlesques.

The poet of the *Chase* must have read and approved of Fielding's song, already mentioned, 'The dusky night rides down the sky.' It has an excellent rhythm; and there is, as in Somervile's poem, a touch of compassion for 'poor Renard' that is not wholly perfunctory. Even the moderately gifted Paul Whitehead produced a swinging hunting-piece, 'The sun from the east tips the mountains with gold,' but such things are chilly to read, and require to be trolled and shouted. So, too, with all the songs on feasting and bibbing; but there is a homely gaiety in the *Good Old Things* of John Collins, with its refrain 'To regale an old friend with a flask of old wine.' Collins is best remembered for the poem rescued by Palgrave in the *Golden Treasury*, 'In the downhill of life.' There is the well-known *Brown Jug* of Francis Fawkes; and the praise of 'lovely brown October' is chanted by Matthew Concanen in an equally spirited ballad. Fielding's *Roast Beef of Old England* may complete the banquet; but there are many other contributors.

There is no lack of light and rasping satire, whether political, or personal, or simply descriptive of manners. The political kind is best represented by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams [1] (1709-1759), once a light skirmisher in the Opposition ranks, and latterly an active but not very successful diplomatist. Pulteney's acceptance of the earldom of Bath occasioned not only the grave *Epistle to Curio* but the assaults of many other rhymers, amongst whom Williams was conspicuous for his sting. Less humane than Prior, less crushing than Swift, he could yet pierce the skin of a politician; and Lord Bath, himself a professed wit, may have felt the venom:

Great Earl of Bath, your reign is o'er:
The Tories trust your word no more,
  The Whigs no longer fear ye;
Your gates are seldom now unbarred;
No crowds of coaches fill your yard,
  And scarce a soul comes near ye.

Few now aspire at your good graces;
Scarce any sue to you for places,
    Or come with their petition,
To tell how well they have deserved,
How long, how steadily, they starved
    For you in Opposition. . . .

With vapours there, and spleen o'ercast,
Reflect on all your actions past
    With sorrow and contrition:

And there enjoy the thoughts that rise
From disappointed avarice,
And frustrated ambition.

Sir Charles Hanbury Williams could find the tune for a popular sentiment, and his unjust lines on George the First in *Plain Thoughts in Plain Language* (1743) tell us more than many disquisitions : this is the animated opening :

He purchased abroad
While his ministers jobbed ;
And Hanover flourished
While Britain was robbed ;
And when he changed hands
For a fresh set of men,
Where those took a shilling,
These villains took ten.

Williams also wrote some graceful lines on his six-year-old daughter, and others on the admired Mrs. Woffington. Like many writers, he ridiculed the 'virtuoso'; and among the curiosities that he was willing to collect for his friend Sir Hans Sloane were, besides Adam's figleaf,

A whetstone worn exceeding small
Time used to whet his scythe withal ;
The pigeon stuffed, which Noah sent
To tell him when the water went ;
A ring I 've got of Samson's hair,
The same which Dalilah did wear ;
St. Dunstan's tongs, etc.

One scrap of verse by Williams, 'Count the bees that on Hybla are straying,' sounds like an absurd anticipation of Swinburne.

Another rhymer with a knack is the writer of the *New Bath Guide*, Christopher Anstey [1] (1724-1805). A country gentleman, Cambridge-bred and scholarly, and of independent means, Anstey, as the fashion was, went to Bath to cure his gout. He studied the visitors, and in 1766 produced his highly popular skit, of which there were many editions and imitations. Its facile tinkle, its local allusions, and its vein of vulgar and sometimes sniggering impropriety, were all in its favour. Anstey, as a versifier, is something of an acrobat, and his feats forecast those of the *Ingoldsby Legends*. He uses the epistolary method, like Thomas Moore in the *Fudge Family* after him ; and the portraits, drawn by themselves, of his foolish young lady, and of his ill-conditioned young gentleman, are adroit enough ; and so are his notes upon the dresses, and the smirkings, and the

flirtings, and all the light vapid humours of the scene. Anstey long survived Smollett and the Bath of the earlier novelists, and his poem is at any rate a document. He wrote other things, such as the *Election Ball*, of the same order ; but it is strange to find him putting Gray's *Elegy* into Latin verse.

> Howe'er the river rolls its tides,
> The cork upon the surface rides ;
> And on ink's ocean, lightly buoyed,
> That cork of vanity is Lloyd.

So speaks Robert Lloyd (1733-1764) in his *Familiar Epistle* (1761) to George Colman. He is hardly too modest, but the cork shows the set of the tide ; and some of his lines, written in 1757, show that the revolt against the ' rules ' was not confined to the heavier critics : Lloyd's imaginative plea is worth saving :

> Had Shakespeare crept by modern rules,
> We 'd lost his Witches, Fairies, Fools ;
> Instead of all that wild creation,
> He 'd formed a regular plantation,
> A garden trim, and all enclosed,
> In nicest symmetry disposed,
> The hedges cut in proper order,
> Nor e'en a branch beyond the border.
> Now like a forest he appears,
> The growth of twice three hundred years,
> Where many a tree aspiring shrouds
> Its airy summit in the clouds,
> While round its root still love to twine
> The ivy or wild eglantine.

In his *Epistle to Mr. Garrick* he contributes to the debate on the unities :

> The poet's fancy can create,
> Contract, enlarge, annihilate,
> Bring past and present close together,
> In spite of distance, seas, or weather ;
> And shut up in a single action
> What cost whole years in its transaction.

Lloyd's lines on the followers of Milton have been quoted already. His parodies, written jointly with Colman, of the *Bard* and other Pindaric odes are not only good but good-natured. A woodcut in his *Poems* of 1762 shows the modern ' bard ' being kicked over a precipice into space by his overdriven Pegasus. Elsewhere he expresses an honest admiration for Gray :

> Or who, like him, shall sweep the Theban lyre
> And, as his master, pour forth thoughts of fire ?

Lloyd was hand-in-glove with Churchill, and in his *Epistle* to Colman presents the humours of a theatre in a state of uproar. He died young, and left too little of his sparkling verse. He was aptly judged by his friend John Wilkes, who is not often quoted as a critic :

His peculiar excellence was the dressing up an old thought in a new, neat, and trim manner. He was contented to scamper round the foot of Parnassus on his little Welsh pony, which seems never to have tired.

Much of this humorous social verse, scattered about in Dodsley's and the other miscellanies, is anonymous, or is signed by some mere *nominis umbra*. Much is due to the example of Swift, though none of the writers have his strength of talon ; and perhaps one Swift is enough. He provides a motto which may show the difficulty of selecting from this kind of work :

In bulk there are not more degrees
From elephants to mites in cheese
Than what a curious eye may trace
In creatures of the rhyming race.
From bad to worse and worse they fall ;
But who can reach the worst of all ?
For though, in nature, depth and height
Are equally held infinite,
In poetry the height we know ;
'Tis only infinite below.

Seeking to keep above the danger-line, and only noting what may not be poetry proper, but is at least vivid or entertaining rhyme, we notice that some of the *dramatis personae* of the comic stage or the novel find their way into verse. Such, for example, is the broken soldier, living on his wits and with his back to the wall, and a victim of the familiar ' spleen.' Isaac Hawkins Browne presents him in a *Letter from a Captain in his Country Quarters to Corinna in Town*, on the eternal theme :

When thou, my fair one, art away,
How shall I kill this foe, the day ?
The landed squire, and dull freeholder,
Are, sure, no comrades for a soldier. . . .

A similar whine is heard in the anonymous lines from ' Captain T—,[1] of Battereau's Regiment in the Isle of Skie, to Captain P—, at Fort Augustus.' Though hardly stern enough for Hogarth, they might have given him a subject, and they merit a somewhat longer quotation :

. . . My hat grown white and rusted o'er,
Once *bien troussé* with *galon d'or* ;

My coat distain'd with sun and rain,
And all my figure quite campaign.
Tavern and coffee-house unwilling
To give me credit for a shilling;
Forbid by every scornful belle
The precincts of the gay *ruelle*.
My vows, though breath'd in every ear,
Not even a chambermaid will hear;
No silver in my purse, to pay
For opera-tickets, or the play:
No message sent to bid me come
A fortnight after to a drum;
No visits or receiv'd, or pay'd,
No ball, ridotto, masquerade;
All pensive, heartless, and chagrine [*sic*]
I sit, devoted prey to spleen;
Shabbily fine, with tarnish'd lace,
And hunger pictur'd in my face. . . .

Parody, or literary burlesque, was not very brilliant outside the limits of the drama and the mock epic. The heroic play suffered at the hands of Carey, Fielding, and Sheridan; and the cult of Milton, as we have seen, lent itself to a kind of respectful trifling with the grand style: a procedure set on foot by the avowed burlesque of the *Splendid Shilling*. The heroic couplet also gave many an opening; and here the best of the mocking-birds is Isaac Hawkins Browne the elder (1705-1760), whose *jeu d'esprit, A Pipe of Tobacco, in Imitation of Six Several Authors*, can be read in Dodsley's *Collection*. Browne's *Poems upon Various Subjects, Latin and English*, were posthumously published in 1768. The editor, his son, Isaac the younger, tells us that the six authors are Cibber, Thomson, Young, Pope, and Swift; besides Ambrose Phillips, who is imitated by another hand. All these pieces are eulogies of tobacco; and the long whimsical visage of the author, opposite the title-page, suggests a genial companion. The parodies are deft; but Pope is caught admirably:

Blest leaf! whose aromatic gales dispense
To templars modesty, to parsons sense. . . .
Rest to the weary, to the hungry food,
The last kind refuge of the wise and good. . . .
Nor less the critic owns thy genial aid,
While supperless he plies the piddling trade.

Better still, because harder to do, is a travesty of Dryden, which was not included in the *Pipe of Tobacco*; his cadence and style of compliment are curiously well echoed:

Under this marble stone intombed are laid
The precious relicts of a pious maid;

A form too lovely to be snatched away,
A mind too good to make a longer stay;
So many virtues to that form were given,
Nature mistook, and made her first for heaven;
Or else 'twas chance, and from the mouldering frame
Leapt out a goddess, what was meant a dame.
Th' impression of a lucky hit she bore;
Nature ne'er made a masterpiece before. . . .

This adroit writer perhaps did not guess that his frivolities would be remembered—if only just remembered—rather than his Latin lines on the immortality of the soul and his translation of fragments from Solon.

As a pendant may be quoted, from the *Poetical Calendar*, an anonymous mock at the 'poetry of the graveyard'; it is addressed 'To a gentleman who desired proper materials for a Monody,' and neatly sums up the stage properties of the school:

Flowrets—wreaths—thy banks along—
Silent eve—th' accustomed song—
Silver-slippered—whilom—lore—
Druid—Paynim—mountain hoar—
Dulcet—eremite—what time—
('Excuse me—here I want a rhyme.')
Black-browed night—Hark! scretch-owls sing!—
Ebon car—and raven wing—
Charnel houses—lonely dells—
Glimmering tapers—dismal cells—
Hallowed haunts—and horrid piles—
Roseate hues—and ghastly smiles—
Solemn fanes—and cypress bowers—
Thunderstorms—and tumbling towers—
Let these be well together blended—
Dodsley 's your man—the poem 's ended.

A longer skit, an *Ode to Horror*[1] (1751), possibly by Bonnell Thornton, and printed in the *Student*, agreeably derides not only these stage properties, but Melancholy and Enthusiasm, and 'Gothic solitude.' The targets there are Collins and the Wartons, who will be discussed presently (Ch. XIV.).

If in that breast, so good, so pure,
Compassion ever loved to dwell,
Pity the sorrows I endure;
The cause—I must not—dare not, tell;

The grief that on my quiet preys,
That rends my heart—that checks my tongue—
I feel will last me all my days,
But feel it will not last me long.

These lines, entitled *L'Amour timide*, ring true, and the author was in fact to die young; but not before showing clear signs of

poetic ease and skill. Sir John Henry Moore,[1] baronet (1756-1780), was one of the Batheaston triflers, and dropped Anstey-like verses into Lady Miller's vase ; but his talent for light and finished satire is evident, and he has been aptly said to announce the ' spirit and the note ' of Byron. It is, no doubt, in a minor way ; it is the Byron of *Beppo*, gay and ready, malicious and amused, and rhyming in the conversational style. In the *Duke of Benevento, a Tale*, the demoralised indolent young hero has been captured by the Sultan, and forced to tend his mules. Almida, who has rejected and warned the Duke, is destined to the conqueror ; but she puts him off by a trick, and lashes and spirits up her lover to arrange a rescue. He succeeds, reforms himself, claims Almida, turns on his evil counsellors, and dismisses the Sultan, now his prisoner, with gratitude :

> ' Go, brave Abdalla, to your native shore ;—
> From sloth, from vice, from infamy,
> Your kind instructions and assistance
> Have haply set me free ;
> Thanks for your visit, pray return no more ;
> Let us be friends, but at a distance.'

The rhymes come when and where they are wanted, without any strain, and no word in the poem is misspent. Moore only produced one thin volume, styled at first the *New Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1777), but, in later editions, *Poetical Trifles*. It contains one of the parodies of Gray's *Elegy*, and the tolerant picture of the Cambridge don may be set off against the bitter allusions of Gibbon and Adam Smith to the Oxonians :

> At night, encircled with a kindred band,
> In smoke and ale rolled their dull lives away ;
> True as the college clock's unvarying hand,
> Each morrow was the echo of today.
>
> Thus, free from cares and children, noise and wife,
> Passed his smooth moments, till by fate's command
> A lethargy assailed his harmless life,
> And checked his course, and shook his loitering sand.

XI

English does not, like some of the Latin tongues, lend itself to the professional improviser ; it has too many consonants and too few double rhymes ; but no one has filled the position, or overcome the hindrances, better than John Byrom [2] (1692-1763) ; and it is remarkable that so much of his verse should still be afloat. If not exactly poetry, it has a sound claim on

the reader of poetry. Byrom seems to have thought and dreamt in rhyme, as others do in prose. Masses of doggerel, no doubt, are the result; but even this shows that he had an ear. His prettiest and neatest things, the *Colin and Phoebe* which appeared in the *Spectator*, and the various snatches that preach cheerfulness and contentment, have the right lilt. Byrom excels in anapaestic verse, his trisyllabic feet go easily; and when they are cast into his long slippery lines, they sound like actual speech. He likes the heading 'extempore verses'; as in the well-known 'God bless the King,' the Jacobite toast in four lines, and in the classic recital of the bout, with sabre and quarterstaff, between Figg and Sutton—a copy of verses that soon survived the epics of Wilkie, Glover, and Blackmore. Byrom could also be very serious; but his devout poetry will be mentioned in connection with his spiritual master and guide, William Law (Ch. XVIII.), whose mystical tenets he set to metre. His hymn 'Christians, awake,' written about the middle of the century, is not tinged by these speculations. Byrom, a Manchester man, invented a popular system of shorthand, which he taught under seal of secrecy. He had some scholarship, and was acquainted with some of the divines and philosophers, with Clarke and Butler, Hartley and Wesley; and his journals and letters are full of vivid reminiscence.

XII

The dissolving views of poetry in the middle of the century can best be observed in Robert Dodsley's [1] famous *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*. The original six volumes (1748-58) were often reprinted, and re-edited, and supplemented. George Pearch, in 1768, revised the work, adding four more volumes; a previous supplement included verse by Moses Mendez. In these eleven volumes almost every poet of note, and many of no note at all, and of almost every school, can be found; and Dodsley's purpose was fulfilled, namely,

> to preserve to the public those poetical performances, which seemed to merit a longer remembrance, than what would probably be secured to them by the manner wherein they were originally published.

There is no reciting the names included by Dodsley. His own friends Shenstone, Jago, Graves, and Anthony Whistler receive much hospitality. To take examples at random, Tickell and Johnson are there, and acres of heroic couplet more;

miles, too, of odes: Collins, Gray, Mason, Gilbert West; and sonnets of Thomas Edwards, and lyrics by Cunningham, and the *Grotto* of Matthew Green. These collections also preserve, or have enabled scholars to discover, many writers who would otherwise have been unknown.

The name of Robert Dodsley (1703-1764) meets us at every turn; he published many of the classics, or influential books, in the second and third quarters of the century. Among these are the *Pleasures of Imagination*, *Odes* of Akenside and Gray, the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, *Rasselas*, and the *Dictionary*; the *Fragments* of Macpherson, and *Sir Charles Grandison*. Dodsley opened his shop, the 'Tully's Head,' in 1735, and retired in 1759; his brother James continued in the firm for many years. Dodsley was a good servant of letters, and did much to raise the calling and enhance the independence of the literary class. One of his great ventures was his *Collection of Old Plays* (1744-5), picked out of the seven hundred that he purchased; another was the *Annual Register*, started in 1759 with Burke for its directing mind. He was also a writer; besides *Cleone* and his various farces, he produced fables, and lyrics, and epigrams which have no claim on our contempt. 'One kind kiss before we part' has survived; and one jibe, at least, deserves the same fortune:

Cries Sylvia to a reverend dean,
'What reason can be given,
Since marriage is a holy thing,
That there are none in heaven?'

'There are no women,' he replies;
She quick returns the jest—
'Women there are, but I 'm afraid
They cannot find a priest.'

A smaller but most attractive collection, which has a certain artistic unity, is the *Poetical Calendar*, published monthly during the year 1763; each number being 'introduced with some original poems, particularly descriptive of the proper month.' The editors were Francis Fawkes, the translator of Theocritus, Anacreon, and other Greek lyrists, and a neat workman in verse; and an obscurer person, William Woty. The *Calendar* proves how slow and hindered, yet how sure, was the poetic appreciation of nature. Woty can flash out into a Spenserian image:

With wreath of yellow crocus bound,
See fur-clad February creep!

And he sees with his own eyes ; even the final epithet, though bizarre, is not a conventional one :

> Again the blossomed hedge is seen ;
> The turf again is drest in living green ;
> Again the lark ascends the sky,
> Winnows the air, and lessens on the eye ;
> The swallow, that the meads forsook,
> Revisits now and skims along the brook ;
> The daw to steeple-top upsprings,
> And the rook spreads his ventilating wings.

The editors wrote many of these descriptive pieces ; and the whole collection mirrors the poetry of the time, in its variety of matter and in its different levels of performance. There is much heavy padding, and what artists call *machines*, from sundry studios ; there are the jogtrot rhymes of Brerewood. But Collins and Cunningham are also enlisted, and William Thompson ; and, if we reach the December number, there is the magnificent greeting of Christopher Smart,

> Hail, eldest of the monthly train,
> Sire of the winter drear,
> December, in whose iron reign
> Expires the chequered year !

But this takes us far from the unaspiring versifiers. There would be no end to the recital of those short-flighted singers or twitterers ; as well count the martins on a summer evening.

CHAPTER XIV

THE WARTONS, COLLINS, AND GRAY

I

ALL these *Collections* and *Calendars*, with verse good and bad, with the older kinds and the newer, huddled together—'pigging,' as Burke said of a certain ministry, 'in one truckle-bed'—show vividly enough the confusions of contemporary taste. The 'schools,' or groups, now discovered by the historians, were hardly realised at the time. Poetry never knows where it is going; and in a time when its inspiration is in great measure literary, it knows less than ever. This was an age when such inspiration was perhaps more powerful than it had been since the age of Chaucer. The chief poet, Gray, was by temperament a mighty reader; and as an artist he was moved, even more than Tennyson, by memories of other poets; a writer of the bee species. As the Greek lyric runs,

> Into the fields he went and sat;
> His heart with joy uprose;
> He took for booty this and that
> Blossom of all that grows.

He belonged, if but half-consciously, to a group with the same instinct, which included the Warton[1] family and Collins. They were all votaries of the Greek ode, or of the Horatian, or of the youthful poetry of Milton. Their verse is often only an enthusiastic exercise; but most of them have a critical sense, and give reasons either in prose or rhyme for their tastes. They have many companions, such as Richard West, Gilbert West, William Mason, and some of these have their shadowy followers too. The whole band form what is called a 'movement,' which means a body of more or less similar literature, surrounded with a penumbra of what is not literature.

> Where Contemplation, maid divine,
> Leans against some aged pine;

so sings Thomas Warton the elder (1688?-1745), B.D., and

professor of poetry at Oxford, whose *Poems on Several Occasions* appeared in 1748; and we need hardly go much further with his original verse. Like his two sons, he is partly conservative in his tastes; he writes epistles in couplets, and Horatian odes; he admires the gloomy muse of Young, as well as chanting, after Milton, the praises of scholarly 'retirement.' His more original reading is shown in his two *Runic Odes*, or adaptations at third-hand from the Norse. He had found English prose versions in the *Miscellanies* of Sir William Temple. They are paraphrases, rough and loose but not without energy, of the lay of Ragnar Lodbrog; who, 'being mortally stung by a viper, before the venom had reached his vitals, broke out into the following verses':

> I come, I come; prepare full bowls,
> Fit banquet for heroic souls;
> What 's life? I scorn this idle breath,
> I smile in the embrace of death.

Dr. Warton precedes Percy and Gray in this field. In his *Ode to Taste* he borrows from Milton the beautiful blank-verse arrangement of the *Ode to Pyrrha*; it is used by both his sons, and by Collins in the *Ode to Evening*.

The elder son, Joseph Warton [1] (1722-1800), the headmaster of Winchester, and a member of the Literary Club, was the schoolfellow and friend of Collins. Their *Odes* (preceded, we have seen, by Akenside's) came out in the same year, 1746, have technically much in common, and show the same enthusiasms. It would be unjust to say that Warton is Collins without the poetry; but he is much more a poet of the studio. His youthful piece, the *Enthusiast* (1744), with its 'thrush-haunted copse' and its nymphs of the 'sun-brown limbs,' augurs well; and the protest against mere skill, which was to be heard again in his *Essay on the Genius of Pope*, appeared in the contrast of 'artful Addison' with 'Shakespear's warblings wild.' In the *Ode to Fancy* Warton cries, 'O let Britannia rival Greece!' even as Collins does in the *Passions*, 'Revive the just designs of Greece!' Greece and Shakespeare, Shakespeare and Milton—on these names the changes are rung. The *Ode to Fancy* also celebrates the 'poets' poet':

> There lay me by the haunted stream,
> Rapt in some wild poetic dream,
> In converse while methinks I rove
> With Spenser through a fairy grove.

There are images in this ode worthy of Spenser; they are not

copied from his procession of the seasons in the *Faerie Queene*: and the cadence is Milton's:

> While Autumn cooling caverns seeks,
> And stains with wine his jolly cheeks,
> While Winter, like poor pilgrim old,
> Shakes his silver beard with cold.

Joseph Warton had, as Gray succinctly remarked, 'but little invention, very poetical choice of expression, and a good ear.' He is not tied to any one style; like Collins, he writes in the heroic couplet, and he practises the usual forms of satire and eulogy. He is, on the whole, more of a critic than a poet. Like the critics of the more law-abiding schools, he has a proper feeling for the *De Sublimitate*. As a schoolboy he had exclaimed,

> I shall read Longinus as long as I live; it is impossible not to catch fire and rapture from his glowing style.

The essay in which Warton invents a new manuscript for Longinus has been noted (Vol. I., p. 93). Pope and Gibbon join the crowd of witnesses to that great appreciator, of uncertain date and identity: an 'ancient' who provided an escape from all the 'rules' into 'an ampler ether, a diviner air.' Warton also introduces Menander and Simonides to the English reader. His essays on pastoral, epic, and didactic verse were printed with translations of the *Eclogues and Georgics* (1763); and he carries on in his unobtrusive way the good tradition of Dryden:

> There remains to be mentioned Virgil's distinguishing beauty and characteristical excellence, his exquisite and expressive brevity. He never inserts a syllable in vain. He is close and prest. He gives us more things than words. We admire others, says a witty writer, for what they say; but we admire Virgil for what he does not say. He never exhausts the subject by saying all upon it that could be said, but leaves something for the mind of the reader to discover.

Joseph Warton is not a revolutionary critic, but a kind of literary Whig. His judgment, already quoted (Ch. XII.), on Pope shows his sound and temperate attitude towards poetry that is not of the highest order. He is not a convert to Gothic complexity. In the *World* he preaches the virtue of simplicity in dress, music, and painting, and also in architecture:

> A vast variety of angles and cavities; clusters of little columns, and a crowd of windows, are what distinguishes meanness of manner in building from greatness; that is, the Gothic from the Grecian: in which every decoration arises from necessity and use, and every pillar has something to support.

II

Thomas Warton [1] the younger (1728-1790), the first historian of our poetry, and himself a poet, is, at least in the eyes of Oxonians, above all a son of Oxford. He took the dye of the place, as it was and still is, more deeply than many greater men. He was a don and a scholar ; his name is associated with Trinity, where he became a fellow ; he laboured in the Bodleian, close by ; in 1757 he became professor of poetry, for ten years ; he wrote Latin verse freely, putting bits of Akenside and Armstrong into hexameters, and editing Theocritus. His record helps to correct the pictures given by Gibbon and Adam Smith of the ancient universities. His *Observations on the Faerie Queene* (1754) explored Spenser's poetic reading and allusions. The first volume of the *History of English Poetry* [2] appeared in 1774, the second in 1778, the third in 1781. In 1785 Warton was made laureate, amid a shower of squibs, entitled *Probationary Odes*, from the writers of the *Rolliad*. But he was a humorist himself, and records the flying gossip and common-room scandals of Oxford in many Hudibrastic rhymes. This pastime he began early in life ; and the *Progress of Discontent* (1746) is a brilliant little series of scenes of clerical life. The budding parson's father makes interest with the college tutor ; the boy enters, in due course becomes a bachelor fellow, but becomes restive and marries ; he then settles, full of high hopes which are doomed to be dashed, in a country vicarage, where he

> Finds his churchwardens have discerning
> Both in good liquor and good learning ;
> With tithes his barns replete he sees,
> And chuckles o'er his surplice-fees ;
> Studies to find out latent dues,
> And regulates the state of pews ;
> Rides a sleek mare with purple housing,
> To share the monthly club's carousing ;
> Of Oxford pranks facetious tells,
> And—but for Sundays—hears no bells.

This Parson's Progress is not unworthy of a disciple of Prior. In later life Warton tossed off easy topical doggrel, year after year, called the *Oxford Newsman's Verses*. He also made satires, such as *Newmarket* (1751), in couplets of the usual sort. But the best of his *facetiae* is a *Panegyric on Oxford Ale* (1748), composed in the manner of John Phillips, the 'matchless bard,'

> Whose steps in verse Miltonic I pursue,
> Mean follower ; like him with honest love
> Of Ale divine inspired, and love of song.

The *Oxford Sausage* (1764), which Warton edited, is a jocose and festive miscellany of local verses old and new, by many hands, and is 'highly seasoned and carefully selected.' Odes are there to 'a grizzled wig,' lines on mutton pies, the song of the 'All Souls' mallard,' and a profane parody of the *Elegy* ('One morn we missed him at the hour of prayer').

Warton did not merely divide his time between the Bodleian and the buttery-hatch; he had also the 'love of song.' Much of his inspiration is bookish, and he reflects the tastes, perhaps the pose, of his family and set. The *Pleasures of Melancholy* (1747) is a title that tells its own tale; phrases are conveyed from Milton, and 'hollow charnels' and 'Gothic vaults' are among the stage properties. Warton came to mediaeval studies partly through his love of architecture, and, unlike his brother, tried to make the word 'Gothic' respectable. The *Verses on Sir Joshua Reynolds's Painted Window* at New College (1782) show his catholic taste or his divided enthusiasms. He describes the Gothic style, the 'vaulted dome' and 'tall shafts' with their 'mingling branches,' and his own impassioned admiration for them; but tells how the sight of 'chaste design' and 'just proportions' of the window 'broke the Gothic chain'; and yet how, at last, Reynolds seemed to 'reconcile' the two orders. The poem, admirably written, mirrors better than any other the transitional state of taste.

Warton is no mere copyist, and his style shows great variety. He must have been the first to celebrate in verse the Glyme and the Cherwell. He observes the country for himself, and sees

> The flinty dovecot's crowded roof
> Watched by the kite that sails aloof,

and also how

> The fresh-turned soil with tender blades
> Thinly the sprouting barley shades.

Also he anticipates in a startling way the mediaeval lays of the next age. This is from the *Crusade*:

> Syrian virgins, wail and weep,
> English Richard ploughs the deep!
> Tremble, watchman, as ye spy,
> From distant towers, with anxious eye,
> The radiant range of shield and lance
> From Damascus' hills advance.

And this from the *Grave of King Arthur*:

> Stately the feast, and high the cheer;
> Girt with many an armed peer,

> Cilgarran, in thy castle hall,
> And canopied with golden pall,
> Sublime in formidable state,
> And warlike splendour, Henry sate.

It is nearly the trick of Sir Walter. We know the scene, the temper, the key of language, and the rhythm. There are many worse things, which yet are excellent, in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*; and Warton's gallant handling of the *lyra heroica* has been too much forgotten.

Some of his sonnets are the best between Milton and Wordsworth; and they are also the nearest to Wordsworth, whose debt to him, in the pensive and commemorative style, seems to be evident. It is a pity that the most beautiful sonnet, *To the River Lodon*, breaks down in its rhymes; Warton is usually correct in structure, using the Italian form, and preferring a regular sestet (*cdcdcd*). Others, like that on *Bathing*, are symmetrical; and one, *Written in a Blank Leaf of Dugdale's Monasticon*, is charged with the true antiquarian passion. The rhyming is again irregular, but it closes quietly, as a sonnet should:

> Nor rough, nor barren, are the winding ways
> Of hoar Antiquity, but strown with flowers.

III

The *History of English Poetry* begins in the 'early Middle English' period and was designed to extend 'to the seventeenth century'; but Warton never fairly gets into the great age, though he begins to speak of Chapman and his *Homer*, and left in his notes a long account of Hall's, Marston's, and other satires. He might not have felt quite at home among the bolder Elizabethans, and his last sentence has an uncertain sound. There came, he says, a time, 'propitious to the operations of original and true poetry,' but

> when taste and learning had so far only disciplined imagination, as to suffer its excesses to pass without censure or control, for the sake of the beauties to which they were allied.

Warton, no doubt, is more of a scholar and excavator than a critic; his historical sense is often overpowered by his mass of material. Yet he has the solid regard of historians and critics; he was the first to show them a great part of their quarry. Much of his work had the value of a perfectly fresh anthology: quotations and abstracts and titles were just what was wanted. In

his own field of learning only Tyrwhitt and Gray could compare with him; and he did a great instalment of what Gray and Pope had only planned. He opened up the stores of mediaeval satire and allegory, and above all of romance; threw light on Chaucer's library; made Langland and Lydgate, and the Scottish poets, much better known; and blazed large tracts of that difficult *terra incognita*, the fifteenth century. His guiding impulse can perhaps be found in his remark that

> the manners of Romance are better calculated to answer the purposes of pure poetry, to captivate the imagination, and to produce surprise, than the fictions of classical antiquity.

In the word 'surprise' is the germ of that useful but one-sided formula, the 'renascence of wonder.'

Warton usually prefers to hand his material to his readers and let them judge for themselves, but his comments can be pertinent enough. He explains at length how Prior has 'misconceived and essentially marred' the design of the *Nut-Brown Maid*; and he sets part of *Henry and Emma*, the 'decorated and diluted' version, in the pillory, after quoting from the original. He sees the 'pathos and simplicity of sentiment' in Chaucer's *Troilus*, and speaks worthily of Surrey's poem on the joys of Windsor. His work, however much built upon, cannot become obsolete; and, though standing in the rear, it is not quite obscured by the great works of 'applied literature' in his own day, the *Wealth of Nations*, the *Decline and Fall*.

IV

The progress of taste, which was slower than that of poesy, may be measured by the reception of the rarest lyrical poet between Rochester and Chatterton. William Collins[1] (1721-1759) was not ignored either in his own generation or in the next; but his admirers were on their defence, and he was never popular. John Gilbert Cooper, in *Letters concerning Taste* (1754 or 1755), remarks that 'his neglected genius will hereafter be both an honour and a disgrace to our nation'; and there are other tributes. Goldsmith, when Collins was dead, said a kind word for the *Persian Eclogues*; and Johnson, in a 'character' published in the *Poetical Calendar* (1763), wrote:

> Yet, as diligence is never wholly lost, if his efforts sometimes caused harshness and obscurity, they likewise produced in happier moments sublimity and splendour.

Johnson's afterthoughts in the *Lives of the Poets* are severer. He always speaks with true affection of the man; but, as we might expect, has no ear for his music, and no eye for his landscape; and ends with one of his most interesting blunders: 'the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise, when it gives little pleasure.' He shakes his head over the inverted clauses, and the lines that are 'clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants.' These are real imperfections; but Johnson did not entirely reflect public opinion. Thomas Warton in his *History* remarks of his 'lamented friend,' that his '*Odes* will be remembered while any taste for true poetry remains.' Nor was this merely an affectionate phrase: Collins's poems had been published in 1765 by John Langhorne, with an eulogy; and there were several more editions during the century. He was to be duly prized by Hazlitt and Wordsworth; the *Golden Treasury* of Palgrave and the praises of Swinburne placed him in his niche.

Collins was not a great inventor of poetical forms; odes were in the fashion, and he wrote little except odes. They flowed also from Akenside and the Wartons. Collins did what these poets were trying to do; but he was at first little appreciated. The age could admire, if not very willingly, the rounded form and stately images of Gray, and his jewellery of incrusted phrase; it could hardly hear the note of the song-thrush. The smallness of Collins's production, due in part to his broken health, was also a hindrance; and the *Highland Ode*, the poem which best shows what he might have become, was only printed long after his death.

Collins was widely read, a good linguist, and a precocious rhymer. At Winchester, like his friend Joseph Warton, he learned his love for the Elizabethans, Milton, and the Greeks. It is doubtful whether he wrote the little song, 'Young Damon from the vale is fled,' with 'the sentiments imitated from Shakespeare.' If he did, it already shows the two styles, the evil and the good angel, that were always to contend in his handiwork:

> But will he ne'er return, whose tongue
> Could tune the rural lay?
> Ah, no! his bell of peace is rung,
> His lips are cold as clay.

Collins published his *Persian Eclogues* in 1742, while still at college; they were to reappear fifteen years later, with a few changes, as *Oriental Eclogues*. At the end of 1743 came out the *Verses humbly addressed to Sir Thomas Hanmer on his*

Edition of Shakespear's Works; and, in the next year, a greatly altered version, together with the *Dirge in Cymbeline*. Collins went to London without a solid profession, and threw himself on literature, on 'the whirlpool's shrieking face'; lived from hand to mouth and with little care, but formed friendships with Thomson and with Johnson, forgathering also with Garrick and Foote and Quin. At the end of 1746 he brought out his thin volume of *Odes on several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects*. Of some of these, again, there were subsequent revisions. He also formed and dropped, like Coleridge, many comprehensive literary plans. Thomas Warton speaks of a projected 'history of the restoration of learning under Leo the Tenth,' for which Collins had 'collected many scarce books,' and of a 'preliminary dissertation' actually done. There was also the translation, only begun, of Aristotle's *Poetics*; on the strength of which, as we learn from Johnson, the poet was 'advanced as much money as enabled him to escape into the country.' 'He showed me the guineas safe in his hand.' But the task was reserved for the taste of Twining and the scholarship of Tyrwhitt. In 1749 appeared the *Ode on the Death of Mr. Thomson*; and in the same year was drafted the *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland, considered as the Subject of Poetry*. Collins's last seven or eight years seem to have been almost barren. But his insanity, though often complete, was intermittent, like that of Smart and Cowper. There are pathetic accounts of his condition, but when he was well his mind was alert and his passion for letters unabated. It is recorded how in his good hours he would read the Bible, or have it read to him by an unlettered 'female'; 'correcting her mistakes, which indeed were very frequent.'

V

The *Eclogues* are not much more Persian, or 'oriental,' than the *Vision of Mirzah*, and have little enough poetic thought behind them. Yet in their easy couplets we catch a new, a soft and musical ripple, which reminds us of Goldsmith. The sharp edges of the heroic measure are softened away, as they had been, long before, in Parnell's *Hermit*; and there is a feeling for scent and colour, which is prophetic:

> Deep in the grove, beneath the secret shade,
> A various wreath of odorous flowers she made;
> Gay-motleyed pinks and sweet jonquils she chose,
> The violet blue that on the moss-bank grows;

> All sweet to sense, the flaunting rose was there;
> The finished chaplet well adorned her hair.

In the youthful *Verses to Hanmer* (afterwards revised to good effect) Collins seeks to do what Gray afterwards accomplished, namely to sketch the progress of poetry. The pattern is the *Essay on Criticism*; and there are some amusing errors of fact. The poet makes (though not in his first version) the '*soft Provençal*' *pass* to Florence in the time of the Medici; and insists (in both versions) that, unlike the more feminine Fletcher, 'stronger Shakespeare felt for man *alone*.' Nay, he calls the unknown collector of Homeric lays 'some former Hanmer,' in compliment to the honest country gentleman who printed his Shakespeare so sumptuously. But we forget all this for the lines on 'Homer's numbers'—

> Their own Ulysses scarce had wandered more,
> By winds and waters cast on every shore,

and on Coriolanus—

> E'en now, his thoughts with eager vengeance doom
> The last sad ruin of ungrateful Rome.

Also there is the praise of 'sweet Racine,' and of Virgil's 'temperate strength'; and already, in spite of 'spring diffusive' and the 'swains contented,' the new magic is there, 'and twilight fairies tread the circled green.'

Collins lives by his odes; and little as he wrote, he attempted almost all varieties of the form, and devised some of his own. It is simplest to group them according to their structure, though the term ode was very loosely used. Four times, but always imperfectly, he employs the symmetrical Pindaric: in the poems *To Fear*, *To Mercy*, *On the Poetical Character*, and *To Liberty*. Akenside (not to speak of Gray) is a much more correct metrical builder than Collins; who either has no epode, or sets it between the strophe and the antistrophe, though this last practice has some Greek precedent; the whole balance seems to be disturbed. The interposing verse drives out of mind the measure which is due to be repeated. But the breath of poetry is there. We see how eagerly Shakespeare, Milton, and the Greeks contest, as it were, for the affections of Collins. In the *Ode to Fear*, after chanting of Œdipus and Jocasta and of Marathon, he catches the volatile essence of Herrick and of *L'Allegro*. The fairies of our midlands had slept for a hundred years, for all that the poets knew; but were now awake again. Down in Warwickshire or Devonshire, of course, they had

been afoot and dancing all the time, but they had been little besung.

> Ne'er be I found, by Thee o'erawed,
> In that thrice-hallowed eve abroad,
> When ghosts, as cottage maids believe,
> Their pebbled beds permitted leave,
> And goblins haunt, by fire, or fen,
> Or mine, or flood, the haunts of men !

In the *Ode to Liberty*, which opens to the tune of the ' Spartan fife ' and the strains of Alcæus, the progress of poetry is again recited ; and it comes down, as in Gray's ode, ' from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England.' Collins does not here ' lose himself in the sand,' as Matthew Arnold complains of his doing in the *Ode to Evening*. The ode is well made, and it rises to a larger rhythm than the *Ode to Fear*. There is a splendid flash of prehistoric vision in the lines picturing the time when France and England were not severed by the sea :

> To the blown Baltic then, they say,
> The wild waves found another way,
> Where Orcas howls, his wolfish mountains rounding ;
> Till all the banded West at once 'gan rise,
> A wide wild storm even Nature's self confounding,
> Withering her giant sons with strange uncouth surprise.

But none of the shorter odes of Collins have a more sustained inspiration than that *On the Poetical Character*. It comes, in a sense, from *L'Allegro*, and is so far bookish ; but so is *L'Allegro* itself bookish, and yet its magic is baffling and underived. In this sense Collins is a true disciple of Milton ;

> And Truth, in sunny vest arrayed,
> By whom the tarsel's eyes were made ;
> All the shadowy tribes of Mind
> In braided dance their murmurs joined,
> And all the bright uncounted Powers
> Who feed on Heaven's ambrosial flowers.

This ode is perhaps, along with that *To Evening*, Collins's most perfect composition ; his poetic ardours seem to be at their height ; and it has not, like that ode, an anticlimax, a drop of cold water at the very end thrown by Science ; nor has it anything like the ' weeping hermit ' who intrudes on the ' How sleep the brave.'

The Passions, an Ode for Music, is his only quite irregular poem. It is on the familiar model of *Alexander's Feast* ; it has more poetry in it, if less *bravura*, than that resounding work. It has no plan, except that the ' passions ' are recited until the

author can think of no more to present. Each of them, according to the approved pattern set by Dryden, chooses its own measure, and that with a sure instinct. The fiercer, Fear, Anger, Despair, and Jealousy, have each a rapid quatrain; Revenge, who interrupts Hope, but who is attended by Pity ('each dreary pause between'), has a longer stanza. But the happier figures, Hope and Melancholy, Cheerfulness and Joy, with Love and Mirth in attendance, and Sport and Exercise besides, are portrayed at more length, are more distinctly and beautifully seen, and inspire the more beautiful words and tunes. Spenser's gift of making such personifications live and move and shimmer before us is indeed revived. Melancholy, as with Milton and Gray, is the happiest of the passions, and the most poetic, with her 'love of peace, and lonely musing'; and Joy, whose 'ecstatic trial' is the climax of the ode, is a wild and genuine joy, like that of the maids dancing upon Tempe, in a spirit that must have commended itself to William Blake. In the closing address to Music there is a drop, and the figures of 'Virtue, Fancy, Art,' are not pictures at all; but we hear the master-inspiration of Collins in the words 'Revive the just designs of Greece.' All his masters aid him in this poem. He begins with Dryden, and proceeds to Milton, and ends with the Greeks; and, just as in some Renaissance work, the sources are mingled without any sense of incongruity; although, it is true, '*Cecilia's* mingled world of sound' rings strangely in the neighbourhood of the 'loved Athenian bower.' The inequalities of Collins's style are not absent from this stately poem, but are carried off by its richness of colouring and its swiftness of movement. In 1750 it was performed, set to music by William Hayes, at Oxford, and reprinted, with a finale by another hand. In 1811 it was freely translated into Italian by an 'advocate,' Martelli, with an indignant protest against the disparagement of Collins by Johnson; whose mind, observes this admirer, was grimy (*lorda*) with 'grammatical dust.'

VI

The four odes written in short lines and in various six-line stanzas are those *To Simplicity*, *To Pity*, *To Peace*, and *On the Death of Colonel Ross*. They are somewhat formal in address, and three of them begin with an *O thou!* The *Ode to Simplicity* is the least chequered and the most characteristic. *To Pity* and *To Peace*, though full of poetic phrase, are hampered by inversions and by some awkward phraseology. *To Simplicity* is

by no means free from these drawbacks; but there are two verses, 'By all the honeyed store,' and 'By old Cephisus deep,' which Milton, who inspired their cadence, might well have owned. Collins here listens to the nightingales of Athens. He does not always attain the 'simplicity' that he wishes, but we see what he understands by it. It is not the simplicity of the Augustans —Roman elegance and point—but Greek simplicity of outline and purity of tint. At the moment he seems to prefer this to the charms of his not less loved Elizabethans:

> Though Taste, though Genius, bless
> To some divine excess,
> Faints the cold work till Thou inspire the whole.

In the quatrains *On the Death of Mr. Thomson* there is some luggage of convention and personification; but it is appropriate to Thomson and enhances rather than spoils the note of gentle regret:

> Yet lives there one, whose heedless eye
> Shall scorn thy pale shrine glimmering near?
> With him, sweet bard, may Fancy die,
> And joy desert the blooming year.

The Thames at Richmond is as closely linked with the memory of Thomson as the Thames at Bablockhithe with that of the Scholar-Gipsy. Has any poetic spirit celebrated the reaches of the river *below* London? Yes, Charles Dickens, in prose, in *Great Expectations*.

The *Dirge in Cymbeline* (1744), like the 'ode' *Written in the Beginning of the Year 1746*, shows the usual mixture of sixteenth- and eighteenth-century styles; but beauty and Shakespeare easily predominate; and there was to be nothing like them till *Ælla* and the *Poetical Sketches*. They are not *pastiche* but re-creation. Darley and Hood, and even Beddoes, in the 'romantic' period, do not catch the true note so often as these stray singers in the 'age of reason.' We must give thanks for such poetry whenever it comes, and forget the dates. Still, it remains a mark of the time that some of the best verse which it produced was just of this order, rather than of a new, unheard-of order altogether; and the dependence of the eighteenth-century muse on recovery, rather than on discovery, could hardly be better seen. But Collins, exquisitely as he can do this kind of work, is not content with it; he breaks away from it, and produces the greatest of our unrhymed lyrics; for so, apart from those in Tennyson's *Princess*, the *Ode to Evening* may be fairly called.

The slow lingering quatrain, used by Milton in translating Horace's ode *To Pyrrha*, and suggested by the original metre, was borrowed, as we have noted, by all three of the Wartons. It was almost the badge of a group, like the ballades and triolets in the later part of the nineteenth century. But only Collins brought out its music. He took trouble over the poem, and the changes printed in Dodsley's *Collection* of 1748 are all for the better. The original 'brawling springs' would not, like the 'solemn springs,' have 'soothed the ear' of Evening; and the verse which by itself would place Collins by the side of Constable,

> Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
> Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile,
> Or upland fallows grey
> Reflect the last cool gleam,[1]

had at first run,

> Then let me rove some wild and heathy scene,
> Or find some ruin 'midst its dreary dells
> Whose walls more awful nod
> By thy religious gleams.

The change here takes us from one age of poetry into another. Every one feels the nice shades of the twilight in this ode. Gray's evening landscape, with all its delicacy, is of a more general kind, and speaks more to the pensive mind than to the awakened eyesight. The poetic senses of Collins, with his 'sallow Autumn' and his 'gradual dusky veil,' were re-born in Keats; and something like them, in his own time, can be noticed, as we have seen, in the neglected Cunningham.

The lines on the *Manners* (also called an 'ode,' though written in regular octosyllabics) declare that the poet has taken leave of Plato (as we know that he did of Aristotle) and the study of the 'dim-discovered tracts of mind,' and has turned to peruse the 'manners' and the 'comic sock.' Collins was a friend of actors, but his homage is paid to Cervantes and Lesage, and also to Humour, whom he addresses, not very consistently, as

> thou whose name is known
> To Britain's favoured isle alone.

The ode, considering the topic, is curiously abstract in language, and 'Observance,' or observation, is not an easy personage to clothe in imagery; but amends are made by 'young-eyed healthful Wit,' with 'jewels in his crisped hair.' In no other poem is Collins otherwise than solemn, or serious; and we like to remember, in his troubled life, that

he had the liberty of the scenes and greenroom, where he made

diverting observations on the vanity and false consequence of that class of people ; and his manner of relating them to his particular friends was extremely entertaining.

VII

The uncompleted *Highland Ode*, which lay some forty years unpublished, was inspired not by travel but by conversation and books. Collins did not, like Keats, go to the Highlands. In 1749 that indifferent poet, the amiable John Home, was with him at Winchester ; and afterwards received from him a draft of the ode, dedicated to Home himself, and described by him as 'hastily composed and incorrect.' This MS. was heard of by Johnson and others, and lost, and found again. In the end it reached Alexander Carlyle, who read it out in 1784 to the Royal Society of Edinburgh ; and it was printed in their *Transactions* of 1788. Words and phrases by Alexander Carlyle, and twenty-five continuous lines by Henry Mackenzie, were here inserted to fill the gaps, but are typographically marked. The text [1] of the poem was long in confusion ; the MS. was again lost ; and a nameless editor, later in the year 1788, published a version containing changes and additions of varying merit ; they have no satisfactory authority, and are now banned. If this unfinished poem had not been found we should not know the full measure of our regret that Collins was so early silenced. The roomy stanza of seventeen or eighteen lines (the plan is not regularly kept) seems to be his own discovery. It has something of a sonnet-ring, and the closing alexandrine echoes Spenser or Dryden. The slow movement, and the clustering consonants which Johnson disliked, are here in place. Even the halting grammar enhances the picture of the wanderer stumbling darkly to his fate in the morass :

> Ah, luckless swain, o'er all unblest indeed !
> Whom late bewildered in the dank, dark fen,
> Far from his flocks and smoking hamlet then !
> To that sad spot——

Here came a gap, not ill patched by Carlyle, 'where hums the sedgy weed.' Better still is the march of the apparitions past the caldron ; and thus can poetry beget poetry :

> Before the Scot afflicted and aghast,
> The shadowy kings of Banquo's fated line
> Through the dark cave in gleamy pageant past.

The fancy of Collins had been fired by reading the lengthy works of Martin Martin,[2] 'gent.,' entitled *A Voyage to St. Kilda*

(1698) and *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (1703). Martin is a literal and faithful reporter, not strong in his grammar, but none the worse for his share of simple-minded credulity. His account of the 'popular superstitions,' and especially of the belief in the second sight, is full of matter, and was known to two later tourists, Boswell and Johnson. He furnished Collins with the stuff of the stanza on St. Kilda, whose inhabitants, in their 'primal innocence,' plunder the solan geese and resort to 'drain the sainted spring.' He also gave the hint for the isle of Pigmies:

> There has [*sic*] been many small bones dug out of the ground here, resembling those of human kind more than any other. This gave ground to the tradition which the natives have of a very low-statured people living once here, called *Lusbirdan*, *i.e.* Pigmies.

The passage is transmuted: the muse, we hear, may

> extend her skirting wing
> Round the moist marge of each cold Hebrid isle,
> To that hoar pile which still its ruins shows;
> In whose small vaults a pigmy folk is found,
> Whose bones the delver with his spade upthrows,
> And culls them, wondering, from the hallowed ground!

Collins passes lightly over Martin's homely tale of the cows who run away 'in a great fright,' sharing the second sight of the milker, and who 'will not be mollified for some time after.' He exalts the seers into 'wizards' and bestows on them visions of his own,

> When o'er the watery strath or quaggy moss
> They see the gliding ghosts unbodied troop.

These ghosts, however, have more 'body' than the declaiming phantoms of Macpherson's *Ossian*. I have not lit on any printed source for Collins's vision of the will-o'-the-wisp who lures his victim on, and at last, in the shape of a fiend, drowns him. The ode is somewhat interrupted by the adjuration to Mr. Home to 'proceed' himself, encouraged by the example of Shakespeare, with the subject. But Collins is stirred by *Macbeth*, and also by the memory of the cypress in Tasso, which poured out its 'gushing blood' under the stroke of Tancred. He had read the story in the version of 'British Fairfax.' The *Highland Ode*, so long buried, could not influence contemporary verse; but, when written, it was a very early signal of the renewed interest of the poets in things preternatural. Like some of the folk-ballads, it has an airy and a strange music, and what has been called a 'rich melancholy fullness.' But the

melancholy is in the scene, not in the writer. Collins, despite his malady, is not one of the complainers in verse ; he is buoyed up by always finding new sources of inspiration, or by rediscovering old ones.

VIII

Collins, and Smart, and Chatterton, and many a lesser minstrel have a clear indubitable lyric note that is not within the compass of Thomas Gray [1] (1716-1771). But Gray stands apart from them all in strength and solidity of poetical performance. He came, in spite of critics, to be recognised as the chief living poet, and deserved the honour. His scanty verse may be hindered by a fashion of language that was doomed ; some of its colours may be dulled ; but the fabric, so closely woven and patterned, is made for wear, like a tapestry or carpet that has cost the maker months of eyesight. There is something deeply satisfactory about Gray's finished work, with its unity of construction and effect, with its beauty and variety of phrase, with its concerted music and unfailing sense of rhythm. His attitude to his readers varied. In the *Elegy* he attained his aim of appealing universally. But he was content that his long odes should be ill understood by the multitude, and they cannot be duly valued without some poetic learning. The difference reflects a double strain in Gray's character. He is a scholar, a connoisseur, and something of a recluse, and his habitual motto might have been the phrase of Ben Jonson : ' If you like 't, you may.' But also, deeper down, Gray has a spring of sympathy for the common man and the common lot—provided, no doubt, that he may express it in beautiful abstract terms. He feels for the village dead, for the boys at play who enjoy ' the thoughtless day, the easy night,' and for the convalescent who finds ' opening Paradise ' in the air and sunshine. And there is yet another Gray, whom we can trace in his poetry but who comes out much more plainly in his letters. This is the mocker and humorist who watches the great world, sometimes with indignation, and who shares the sardonic mind of his friend Horace Walpole, talking of men and things in a light raking style and not mincing his words ; and who, living down at Cambridge, has also his scoff at the bitter and rancid intrigues of a university and at the ' monsters appertaining to this climate.' To his friends, Gray is full of gaiety and charm ; he has a few intense affections, all of them bestowed, except in the case of his mother, upon men—Richard West, Thomas Wharton,

Norton Nicholls, and Charles-Victor de Bonstetten. He is also a humanist of the purest water, steeped in the classics ; and an antiquarian, and a naturalist, and a musician. All this is reflected in the prose of his learned notes and his correspondence ; and when we lament that Gray wrote so little, we must remember that his letters, which fill three volumes, are themselves literature. His prose is in the pure style of the best period and free from the diction that he constructed for his verse.

Gray seems to have worn, for the public, the defensive armour of a shy proud man, and some of his portraits suggest the discouraging manner with which he is credited. But there is little to show that his talent was blighted, as Matthew Arnold thought, by the spirit or taste of the time. Probably he would never have written much, although a century later he would have written otherwise. He distrusted himself, cherished a rigid ideal of perfection in form, and was never satisfied with his work. Such a temper was compatible with a very definite wish to promote virtue by his poetry ; he did not live in a didactic age for nothing ; and part of his method is to end a poem with a moral sentence. This side of his writing was eulogised by the versifiers [1] when he died. But he did not like Shelley or Wordsworth solemnly dedicate his days to art or the uplifting of mankind. He wrote his verse in the intervals of taking notes about a hundred other things—Plato's dialogues, or English metres, or Norman architecture, or the orders of insects. Poetry was among his favourite pursuits, and he was one of the wise men who prefer reading to writing.

IX

His first stage as a writer might be termed the *Favonian*. It is bound up with his friendship with Richard West (1716-1742), whom he called Favonius, the west wind : not a ' wild west wind ' at all, but gentle and belonging to the spring. The ' quadruple alliance ' [2] of Etonians also included Walpole and Thomas Ashton, a less engaging person who was afterwards to rise in the Church. Later, there were several ruptures among the band ; but the tie of Gray and West was never loosened. The letters that pass betweeen Gray at Peterhouse and West at Christ Church are full of kindness, gay spirits, and youthful scholarship. They send each other Latin poems and poems from the Latin, and these exchanges continue during Gray's tour (1739-41) in France and Italy with Walpole, from whom at Reggio he parted in anger. Most of Gray's Latin verse, in-

cluding the alcaics written on his visit to the Grande Chartreuse, belongs to this period. West, as an English poet, began earlier than his friends. There is not much in his *Monody on Queen Caroline* or in his scrap of the tragedy *Pausanias* ; but his *View from the Thatcht House at Richmond* is a pleasant thing in the vein of Dyer, with the usual echoes of Milton :

> With many a woody park, and hill
> Hanging o'er some shadowy rill,
> And villas glimm'ring thro' the glade,
> And scattered towns half-wrapt in shade,
> Each with their little spire in view
> Pointing up the clear sky blue . . .

—a vision that is to be noted in the year 1738. In 1742 we hear of Gray's fragment of a Racinian tragedy, *Agrippina*. The *Ode on the Spring*, dated in June, he notes as ' sent to Fav : not knowing he was then dead.' It is thus later than some lines by West which begin, ' Dear Gray, that always in my heart Possessest far the better part.' Gray's bereavement closes the first volume of his life.

He at once writes the sonnet to West, too hardly judged by Wordsworth ; also the *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* and the *Hymn to Adversity*, both of which are coloured if not inspired by his loss. The quarrel with Walpole was on his mind, and peace was not made till three years afterwards. Gray, though now only twenty-six, had begun to practise in his most characteristic form, the ode, and to use English verse ; and the *gravitas*, the strength and seriousness of nature, which underlie the sparkle of his letters, come out in his poetry at once. He probably now started on the *Elegy*.[1] This second stage may be taken to last for some ten years, and to close with the *Stanzas to Mr. Richard Bentley* (1752), the artist whose conventionally fantastic designs more or less adorn the *Six Poems* published in 1753. Except for that on the *Cat*, all these had been written in 1742. Gray had settled at Peterhouse, paying many visits to Stoke Poges, the home of the *Elegy*. For five years after 1742 he wrote little ; the *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat, drowned in a Tub of Gold-Fishes* (1747) breaks the silence ; and there is the fragment on *The Alliance of Education and Government*. *A Long Story* was composed in 1750, and the long-pondered *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, of which the success was speedy, was published in the next year.

Gray wrote poetry so rarely that it is needless to subdivide his record further, though the gradual expansion of his artistic forms and interests can be traced. In 1757 Walpole printed the

Progress of Poesy and the *Bard* at Strawberry Hill. Gray, who had moved to Pembroke College for quiet, declined with some scorn the laureateship, which was vacated by the death of Colley Cibber and fell to William Whitehead. In 1759 he lodged near the newly opened library of the British Museum and added to his heaps of notes; passing, as he puts it, 'through the jaws of a great leviathan,' namely the skeleton whale in the building. In 1768 he issued what we call a definitive edition of his English poems, ten in number; *A Long Story* being dropt, and the additions, which open a new vein of poetic ore, being the *Fatal Sisters*, *Descent of Odin*, and *Triumphs of Owen*. Next year came the *Ode for Music performed at the Installation of the Chancellor of the University of Cambridge*, the Duke of Grafton, who had made the poet professor of modern history. Gray formed plans for lecturing, but never lectured. In 1768 he travelled in the Lakes and wrote his *Journal* of the trip, posthumously printed. In 1771 he died, expressing, so we hear, 'no visible concern at the thoughts of his approaching dissolution.' To this lean record of publications, and to the Latin verses, are to be added some pieces of varying date: more 'odes' from the Welsh, a few satiric flings, a few epitaphs, and two amatory or, rather, complimentary lyrics; and, not least, the unfinished *Ode on the Pleasure arising from Vicissitude*. Some of this driftwood we owe to Gray's literary disciple, correspondent, poetic imitator, and literary executor, William Mason, who in 1775 produced *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. Gray*. Mason included the first published instalment of the letters, garbling them without stint or shame. His method, a good one, of interweaving the life and the correspondence into a continuous story, was adopted and improved out of all knowledge by Boswell. We now, after the labours of many scholars, have the letters in as faithful a form as the doings of Mason have permitted. The mass of Gray's prose memoranda on literature, scholarship, the arts, and natural history was first inspected and culled by Thomas James Mathias, and the best of them are now published.

X

Gray may have felt, like Swinburne, that the choric ode,[1] the true 'Pindaric,' with its long, sweeping, symmetrical verses, is in the nature of things the highest form of lyrical poetry. At any rate, he put his whole strength into it. The long and interrupted history of the form can be read in the treatises on English prosody. No instance is quoted between Ben Jonson's

ode on Sir Henry Morison and the experiments, dated about 1706, of Congreve. Cowley, though he preferred the lawless ode, or sham Pindaric, seems to have known of the regular scheme. Congreve is polite to the memory of Cowley, remarking that the 'beauty of his verses are [*sic*] an atonement for the irregularity of his stanzas'; but adds that he 'may have been the principal, though innocent occasion of so many deformed poems since'; and proceeds, in his patrician grammar, to state clearly the principle of the Pindaric:

> Every epode in the same ode is eternally the same in measure and quantity in respect to itself, as is also every strophe and antistrophe in respect of each other.

That is, all the strophes and antistrophes in the same ode are in the same metre, and all the epodes are in another metre, the same throughout. Many such odes were written in the interval between Congreve and Gray, but none are remarkable; and the same is true of the longer interval between Gray and Swinburne. In spite of these masters, the real Pindaric has never been acclimatised in English; and the reason may be, not merely that 'fine things are difficult,' but that the measure itself is too difficult. Gray himself felt this obstacle:

> Setting aside the difficulties, methinks it has little or no effect upon the ear, which scarce perceives the regular return of metres at so great a distance from one another. To make it succeed, I am persuaded the stanzas must not consist of above nine lines each at the most. Pindar has several such odes.

But if we permit Gray to blame himself, we must also blame Pindar and the tragedians. And if the only way to make sure of the metre is to learn a verse by heart, that is but one reason the more for doing so. Johnson, who naturally prefers the couplet, grumbles, as we might expect, with his usual acuteness:

> His stanzas are too long, especially his epodes; the ode is finished before the ear has learned its measures, and consequently before it can receive pleasure from their consonance and recurrence.

Another result of this scheme is that each verse has almost the effect of a poem in itself, with its own mood and colouring, and with its tune that varies with the mood; the 'iambic' measures and longer lines being slow and solemn, while the 'trochaic' or shorter lines are more rapid and buoyant. Also Gray is for ever seeking to reproduce the full open vowels of the more

harmonious language ; and he can put seven of them in one line, of which six are different :

> Thine, too, these golden keys, immortal Boy !

Indeed, in whatever he wrote, he was a master of these musical sequences. But one resource he missed, which the Greeks and Swinburne commanded, namely the rushing trisyllabic foot ; and in his *Erechtheus* Swinburne uses even the quadrisyllable, or ' pæon ' :

> Who shall put a bridle in the mourner's lips to chasten them,
> Or seal up the fountains of his tears for shame ?

It is the difference between an Arab horseman and one in heavy armour. But they are not riding in the same race, and each of them gets to his goal. Gray has more poetic substance, and more to say, and says it with a magnificence that no one has approached in the same kind ; and this is his compensation.

In the *Progress of Poesy* and the *Bard* he attempts that hardest of all poetic forms, the historical lyric. Only the long ode, perhaps, can ' give ample verge and room enough ' for such a task, and even so it will be heavily laden. It is, no doubt, commemorative in its origin, and Pindar glorified the records of the ruler and the fables of the gods. But Gray packs whole centuries into his nine stanzas ; and in the *Progress of Poesy* he begins with the verse of primitive peoples, adding the note :

> Extensive influence of poetic Genius over the remotest and most uncivilised nations. . . . (See the Erse, Norwegian, and Welsh fragments, the Lapland and American songs.)

The verse ' In climes beyond the solar road ' contains perhaps the first flash of backward vision by any English poet upon the origins of song, and was thus a prophecy of studies yet to come. Such is the overture ; but in the finale Gray comes down to himself and to the very ode that he is writing. There is thus little accommodation for the subject ; it looks as if he had thought out the beginning and the ending, at the expense of the middle ; and history comes badly to grief in the ' progress of poesy from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England,' where the word ' Latium ' seems to do duty both for declining Rome and for the land of the Renaissance. Otherwise the great argument is sustained ; and in the lines on Milton and Dryden Gray reaches the summit of his poetry. With its wide horizons, its ardour of feeling, and its pomp of varying sound, this ode, in its own order of architecture, is hard to excel or parallel.

The *Bard* again shows Gray's interest in the newly known treasures of a poetry which was neither classical nor that of the Renaissance ; and the ode connects itself with his later adaptations from the Welsh and the Norse. The method is again historical. The spirits of the slaughtered bards prophesy the fall and absorption of the house of the criminal Edward the First, and the revival of poetry under Elizabeth. There is the same strained concision as in the *Progress of Poesy*, the same strong tidal movement in the verse, and an even greater allusiveness, which called for many footnotes. But there is more of the grandiose diction which to-day we feel to be obsolete. The bards, after all, wear stage beards, and the header of their spokesman into 'endless night' is too like a theatrical poster. Walpole's judgment on the concluding stanza hits the mark :

> I even think its obscurity fortunate, for the allusions to Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, are not only weak, but the last two returning again, after appearing so gloriously in the first Ode, and with so much fainter colour, enervate the whole conclusion.

Gray was himself dissatisfied with the conclusion. But he could not write without being splendid ; and, as usual, he rises highest when he is simplest, as in the four lines beginning 'Dear lost companions of my tuneful art.' One phrase, 'the ruddy drops that warm my heart,' is an echo from *Julius Caesar*; but the passage is worthy of Shakespeare in his lyric youth.

Mason asserts of Gray that there 'was nothing which he more disliked' than the irregular ode. It might easily repel, with its 'unchartered freedom,' his sense of form and discipline. In the one poem in which he adopts it, the *Installation Ode*, he manages to give it an impress of unity, partly by his usual firm grasp of his idea, and also by the strictness of the musical divisions : the whole being divided into 'air,' 'recitative,' and chorus, with a 'grand chorus' as a finale. The model is thus *Alexander's Feast*, or the *Passions*, and not the odes of Cowley. The actual title runs : *Ode for Music*. Although prompted by genuine gratitude to a patron, the ode is not one of Gray's happier works; it is an official affair, and his heart is hardly in it. We have to forgive, above all, the Star of Brunswick for 'gilding the horrors of the deep' ; but forgive it we do, when we turn to the stanza where the mood of *Il Penseroso* may be echoed in a measure which is nearly that of the *Nativity Ode*, but where the poet is thinking of his own youth and is speaking for himself :

Ye brown o'erarching groves,
That Contemplation loves,
Where willowy Camus lingers with delight!
Oft at the blush of dawn
I trod your level lawn,
Oft wooed the gleam of Cynthia silver-bright
In cloisters dim, far from the haunt of Folly,
With Freedom by my side, and soft-eyed Melancholy.

XI

Gray's shorter odes might have been different if he had not already practised Latin sapphics and alcaics; he emulates the finish and concision of Horace. Whatever the drawbacks of these pieces, there is always a firm grasp and completion of the poetical idea. For this kind of ode is above all, like William Blake's 'tear,' an 'intellectual thing'; impersonal, at any rate on the surface; often addressed to an abstraction; and always with the far-off suggestion of a chorus chanting instructively to an audience. The emotion must not overflow the form, or leave it turbid. Also, of course, it must shape and animate the form, and what happens when it fails to do so can be seen from some of the odes of Akenside, so well designed. But an icicle is well designed. Gray, too, runs some risk of seeming cool; but he is not so within. It must be granted that he has a way of lowering the temperature at the most unfortunate point, namely the end; his usual nice sense of gradation fails him when he drops to the conclusion that 'tis folly to be wise,' or that the modest poet is 'far above the Great.'

These odes seem at first like museum curiosities, old no doubt and impressive, but in a past mode of decoration. Jewels shine here and there, but the figures of Vicissitude and Care and Contemplation are fading. Yet, looking closer, we see that a real artist of the Renaissance has been at work, following an antique pattern but putting his own vision into it. This is felt even in the *Hymn to Adversity*, the most rhetorical of all. There is a stiff majesty about it, and a kind of cavernous resonance in the verse:

Bound in thy adamantine chain,
The proud are taught to taste of pain. . . .

It was admired by Johnson as 'at once poetical and rational'; the model is Horace's ode to Fortune (*O diva, gratum*); but the motto from Æschylus gives the note, and proclaims the dignity of suffering. In the line 'the generous spark extinct revive' Gray may be thinking of his own differences with his friends.

And Wordsworth, though at one time up in arms against the 'classical' diction, tells us that Gray and Horace were his patterns for the *Ode to Duty*. He there copies Gray's metre, and also enlists the old apostrophes and abstractions in the service of a deeper conception than Gray's. But the *Hymn to Adversity* attains its own aim, being a companion of the sonnet to West, 'In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,' and of the *Eton Ode*; and it contrasts with the poem *To Spring* (originally entitled *Noontide*), that half-playful, highly-finished exercise of the earlier and happier months of 1742.

The *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* is one of Gray's strongest performances. In another mood he would have glorified, with a mixture of history and prophecy, the great roll of Etonians and their achievements. But we must leave a poet his subject. Gray is looking through darkened glasses at the playing-field, and arranges his theme like a tragedy, which is bright at the beginning but, as Dante says, 'in exitu foetida et horribilis.' The overture is a mixture of his most natural and tender writing with what seems a painful dose of 'poetic diction'; but the 'idle progeny' and the 'rolling circle's speed' should be read as playful not as pedantic phrases. Then come the foreboded horrors; and if, when we hear that 'all' are 'condemned to groan,' we are tempted to say, 'What, *all*?' still the pageant of Infamy, Falsehood, Unkindness, and Remorse reminds us, in its power and concentration, of Spenser.

In the fragment, dated about twelve years later, with the unpromising title '*Of the Pleasure arising from Vicissitude*,' the balance of feeling is restored, and the poet chants of the natural innocent pleasures of life, intensified by the suffering that is just being forgotten. Every one has noticed the likeness both in tone and style to the more joyous verse that was to be written nearly half a century later in the Quantocks. Gray, however, had originally continued the ode in his more ordinary manner, with 'Humble Quiet builds her cell.' The purity of form in this poem comes out when we glance at the attempt made by the impossible Mason to complete it.

The verses on the drowned cat are a pleasant bit of self-parody, and show that Gray was alive to the risks of the classical-sublime manner. It contains all his own tricks—the apostrophe, the personification, the periphrastic dialect, and the concluding moral tag, not to speak of the dolphin and the Nereid who rub elbows with Tom and Susan. The rounded form and resonant speech of the serious odes are perfectly imitated. And perhaps Gray was not thinking only of himself. All these things were

the current stock-in-trade of the ode-monger, and the years 1740 to 1750 saw a great display of the wares. He may have been glancing at Akenside, or Joseph Warton, or Collins, all of whom had published serious odes meanwhile. Still, he did not abandon the style himself.

XII

There is much less litter of 'poetic diction' in the six translations from the Norse and the Welsh. There are still phrases like 'wading through th' ensanguined field' and 'thrice he traced the runic rhyme,' which falsify both the letter and the spirit of the originals. But Gray has now acquired a plainer and sharper language, which has been justly said to recall the lays of Scott, and which sometimes bears no date at all:

> Long on these mould'ring bones have beat
> The winter's snow, the summer's heat,
> The drenching dews, and driving rain!
> Let me, let me sleep again.

Gray entitled these poems odes, but they are really lays. The measures are enough to separate them from the genuine odes; the *Fatal Sisters* is in quatrain, the *Descent of Odin* is in octosyllabics, and the Welsh pieces are in couplets of seven syllables. Gray probably knew some Icelandic,[1] but he had to assist him Latin prose translations which were cut into lines to correspond with the originals and which bore many traces of their alliteration. And where he can, he reproduces this feature, which is the actual basis of the Northern prosody. The lines

> *Sh*afts for *sh*uttles, dipt in gore,
> *Sh*oot the trembling cords along,

are so far technically correct; and elsewhere, speaking of the Old English and Norse verse, he shows just how far he had grasped its principle:

> their harmony consisting in alliteration, or similar consonances in the beginning of three or more words in each distich.

The *Descent of Odin* has a better subject than the *Fatal Sisters*. The sisters, though impressive, do not prophesy carnage. The Sibyl relates the doom of Balder, one of the great stories of the heathen religion; and Gray does not miss its power and beauty. Both poems form a shining landmark in the course of Northern studies. The first appreciation of an Icelandic lay by an Englishman is traced to Sir William Temple,[2]

who in 1690 had quoted with praise from the *Death-Song of Ragnar Lodbrok*. The splendid *Hervor and Angantyr* had been printed in 1705 in Hickes's *Thesaurus*, with an English rendering buried away in an Anglo-Saxon grammar. In 1755-6 appeared Paul-Henri Mallet's *Introduction à l'Histoire de Dannemarc*, a book which in spite of its many errors popularised the labours of scholars, and which also, through its version of Snorri's prose *Edda*, circulated the stories of the old gods. In his notes to the *Descent of Odin*, Gray uses and refers to Mallet. The work was to be translated in 1770 by Percy, with a long and critical preface. Meanwhile Percy, in 1763, had published *Five Runic Pieces, translated from the Islandic*, which include the lays of Ragnar and Angantyr. This venture was suggested, but seems also to have been swamped, by the vogue of 'Ossian.' Then came Gray, who was widely read, and who found many followers before the end of the century, from Michael Bruce to Amos Simon Cottle; but though several poets, including Landor, continued the line, the Northern genius awaited its interpreter in William Morris.

In the four little lays adapted from the Welsh there is the same pace and vigour as in those from the Icelandic; the same power of shaking off the dead weight of the notebook and of letting the fire kindle. The trochaic measure goes swifter than ever, and here is the whole of *Caradoc*:

> Have ye seen the dusky boar,
> Or the bull, with sullen roar,
> On surrounding foes advance?
> So Caradoc bore his lance.

The *lyra heroica* sounds but a feeble note during the century, and we must be glad of what we can get:

> There the thund'ring strokes begin,
> There the press, and there the din;
> Talymalfra's rocky shore
> Echoing to the battle's roar.

Save for Thomas Warton's lays and Cowper's *Boadicea*, there is not much in this strain until we reach the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Gray's method in these poems is of interest. It is looser in paraphrase than in the Norse pieces, and there are more scraps of imported diction, like 'Confusion, Terror's child.' He seems to have known no Welsh; but he had already taken notes on Celtic antiquities, and had found the suggestion for the *Bard* in Carte's *History of England* (1747-1755). Seeking afterwards to confirm the story, he had come into communication, through

Percy, with a Welsh scholar who was able to assure him of its traditional character. This was Evan Evans [1] (1731-1788), himself a writer of Welsh and English verse, and the discoverer of the sixth-century epic *Gododin*. Gray then saw in manuscript an English prose rendering by Evans of the ode by Gwalchmai, on which the *Triumphs of Owen* is founded. This ode appeared later, in 1764, in Evans's chief work, *Specimens of the Antient Welsh Bards, translated into English*; and here, in the appended *Dissertatio de Bardis*, Gray also had Latin renderings on which to base the *Death of Hoel*, *Conan*, and *Caradoc*. We find Evans, who imitated Pope and Milton in his English rhymes, also echoing Gray, and producing a 'bard' of his own. Gray, however, pursued this vein no further, and found few to follow him. At this time the whole public, and indeed he himself, was more engrossed in the dubious Highland products of Macpherson than in the genuine poetry of the Celt.

XIII

What should we make of the *Elegy*, if we could fancy it to be a newly discovered poem by an unknown author? We could date it with some assurance anywhere between the *Essay on Man* and the *Task*, and assign it to one of the reigning schools, on the strength of Ambition and Grandeur and fair Science, the rustic moralist and hoary-headed swain; and also on hearing of Melancholy—the half-literary, *Penseroso* melancholy, with no sting in it, which was in the air at the time and which haunted the two Wartons, and Collins, and Gray himself. We might say that Gray must have written the nameless piece, because no one else could have written such a good one, and we could find in it affinities with his admitted poems. Yet who would wonder if it really proved to be by Collins? True, we can *now* see the difference of handiwork; the *Elegy* has not the delicate shadowiness of the *Ode to Evening*, or its note of song; and its monumental style and weight of thinking seem beyond Collins. Yet in the *Highland Ode* there are signs of similar power. In any case, the *Elegy* would be seen to fulfil Gray's Roman ideal of language:

> Extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical, is one of the grand beauties of lyric poetry. This I have always aimed at, and never could attain [1758].

However, he did write the *Elegy*, and he did approach to his ideal. The poem speaks to every one, for it expresses to per-

fection what every one feels, who does not feel too much. The humane scholar muses on the village dead, neither friends nor kin ; unknown dead, and English folk, lying amid the leisurely landscape where they had toiled. It is the landscape of our good water-colour schools ; Paul Sandby and John Robert Cozens were at work ; Gray, with his ' glimmering landscape,' is something more than neutral in tint. Some little drawings, in the 1834 edition of the *Elegy*, by Cattermole, Copley Fielding, and Constable, who are later masters, well suggest the soft lines and atmosphere of the scene, and strengthen our natural illusion—though it forms no part of Gray's idea—that repose in such a place must be dimly satisfactory to its inhabitants.

As to the melancholy, it had been partially described by Gray himself in well-known words, written to West in 1742. The mood of the *Elegy* is somewhere between the black and the white varieties that he mentions :

> Mine, you are to know, is a white Melancholy, or rather Leucocholy for the most part ; which though it seldom laughs or dances, nor ever amounts to what one calls Joy or Pleasure, yet is a good, easy sort of a state, *et ça ne laisse que de s'amuser*. The only fault of it is insipidity ; which is apt now and then to give a sort of Ennui, which makes one form certain little wishes that signify nothing. But there is another sort, black indeed, which I have now and then felt, that has somewhat in it like Tertullian's rule of faith, *Credo quia impossibile est* ; for it believes, nay, is sure of everything that is unlikely, so it be but frightful ; and, on the other hand, excludes and shuts its eyes to the most possible hopes, and everything that is pleasurable ; from this the Lord deliver us ! for none but he and sunshiny weather can do it.

The *Elegy* is thought to have been begun about this date, and its harmonious grey tone is caught in a fortunate moment, to be maintained both in the authorised version and in the variants that the poet rejected. We know of these from the three differing manuscripts that have been saved. As with Milton's early poems, we can follow the mind of the artist at work and appreciate many of his reasons. Some of the changes are made for the sake of dignity, as when a phrase like ' chanticleer so shrill,' or ' with gestures quaint,' is dismissed. Other emendations strengthen the sound and meaning : ' the envied kiss ' says more than ' the coming kiss,' and explains itself, which ' the doubtful kiss,' with its classical suggestion, does not. Or an ancient is changed to a modern instance, as in ' Some mute inglorious *Tully*.' Or Gray denies himself a beautiful verse like that on the redbreast, when it seems to break the argument.

He also drops the stanza, 'Hark, how the sacred calm,' perhaps because it could not well be adjusted to other changes. He keeps, however, though not without emendation, the Epitaph, which is usually, and I think justly, felt to be a drop, in spite of its personal note, into his more factitious style. Landor petulantly called this 'the tin kettle of an epitaph tied to its tail.' Many of the small improvements seem to be purely rhythmical, and make all the difference; Gray's ear rejected 'Hands that the reins of empire,' and 'Chill Penury had damped,' with its three dentals. The *Elegy* is worth studying throughout simply for its sound-sequences. Enough to note how and where, in the first verse, the chimes are rung on the vowels in *herd, toll, lea,* or how, in a slow and weighted line like 'Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,' the wrong knots of consonants are avoided.

For his measure, the quatrain, which he uses again, and that with much pomp and power, in the *Stanzas to Mr. Bentley*, Gray had before him Dryden, whom he regarded as his master no less than Milton; and he also had, for its application to elegy, the little poet James Hammond, whose verse had been published in 1743. Johnson praises Gray's poem, but in his *Life of Hammond* denies that the quatrain is fit for elegy, seeing that Dryden had called it the most noble and dignified of all measures, whereas 'the character of the elegy is gentleness and tenuity.' We need say no more of this captious notion, for Gray attains the required magnificence and nobility. He remembered the classical elegiac, with its *inscriptional* character. Nearly all the stanzas of the *Elegy* are self-contained in grammar and meaning; most of them could go well upon a tablet in a church wall; they have stamped themselves, separately, on the general mind; and they have often been put into Latin. In this high memorial style, the English poet most akin to Gray is Walter Landor. The *Elegy*, from the first, has been profusely imitated, parodied, and translated into ancient and modern tongues.

XIV

Gray's verse, whether original or translated, in the heroic couplet is governed by his study of Dryden and by his conversance with Latin. In one lively and early fragment, the *Hymn to Ignorance*, he follows Pope; he has been reading the last book of the *Dunciad*. But usually, like Johnson and Churchill, he reverts to Dryden both for language and versification. He likes to drive the 'two coursers of ethereal race,' the

line of ten followed by the line of twelve. In the passage from Tasso which describes the home under seas of the great river-sources, he works with the same kind of freedom as Dryden. When Tasso only says, 'the solid diamond shines,' Gray amplifies him into the famous distich,

> The diamond there attracts the wond'ring sight,
> Proud of its thousand dies, and luxury of light.

The manner is the same in the two 'imitations' from Propertius; and the speculative strain in the first of them,

> How the rude surge its sandy bounds control,
> Who measured out the year, and bade the seasons roll,

makes us wish that since Dryden had not translated a greater work, the *De Rerum Natura*, Gray had done so himself. He could, we may feel, have written philosophic verse if only a model were supplied him. When he attempts it on his own account, he is as forcible as ever, but he is encumbered. He began, but was discouraged from finishing, his fragment on the *Alliance of Education and Government*, of which Mason provides a prose abstract, and which is affected by Gray's recent reading of Montesquieu; to whom, says Mason, he meant to write a prefatory ode. 'But that great man's death, which happened in 1755, made him drop his design finally.' The poem is almost contemporary with the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, and, like it, well sustains the greater tradition of the measure. Goldsmith, in the *Traveller* (1764) with his simpler strain, sounds modern beside Gray; but the likeness of the two poems has often been noticed. Both of them debate on Montesquieu's question, what are the permanent features of national character, and how far it is moulded by climate; but Gray is concerned to remedy its weaknesses by the 'alliance' which he celebrates. Reasoning in verse demands a more poetical theme. Long before, in 1741, Gray had begun a poem in Latin hexameters, which in fact is his longest work in metre. The title is *De Principiis Cogitandi*, and it aims at nothing less than a summary of Mr. Locke's philosophy on the nature of knowledge, memory, reason, and the passions; with the invocation

> Oh decus! Angliacae certe, O lux altera gentis!

It was sent to West. Gray did not proceed with the system, but added, perhaps five years afterwards, twenty-six lines to his friend's memory which equal in beauty, as they excel in sim-

plicity, the tribute of Milton to Charles Diodati. The alcaics are better poetry than the hexameters and sapphics. The single stanza, 'O lacrymarum fons,' and the five written in the visitors' book at the Grande Chartreuse (1741), have well earned their fame. Like Milton and Landor, who are also haters of the crowd, Gray often keeps the learned language for his graver or shyer feelings, so as to be sure of no vulgar public. He also Latinised, in elegiacs, thirteen poems from the Greek Anthology.

There remains a miscellany of lyrics and humorous effusions. 'Thyrsis, when we parted, swore Ere the spring he would return,' is Gray's only real song, and the line 'Spare the honour of my love,' whatever it may exactly mean, has an older ring about it. The so-called *Amatory Lines*, 'With beauty, with pleasure surrounded,' are a perfect exercise in slowly rippling cadence, only equalled by Richard Jago's *Advice to the Ladies* :

> Believe me, dear maids, there 's no way of evading ;
> While ye pish and cry nay, your roses are fading ;
> Though your passions survive, your beauty shall dwindle,
> And our languishing embers can never rekindle.

This piece was made for Gray's good friend, the Miss Speed of the *Long Story*, later Comtesse de Viry. It is stated (by an anonymous editor) that she asked him 'one day, when he was in company with Mr. Walpole, that she might possess something from his pen on the subject of love.' [1] *A Long Story* relates how, with another lady, she called upon Gray, found he was away, and left a note ; and that was all. On this event he builds thirty-six of his gayest stanzas, adding that five hundred 'are lost.' The vision of the mansion-house at Stoke Poges and of the 'Lady Janes and Joans' who 'repair' out of their picture-frames shows the imagination of the antiquary ; and the tune, with its double rhymes, is much more like a foretaste of Praed than a following of Prior. Gray could also be angry or scornful. There are the lines sent *From Shakespeare* to William Mason's cook, with their fling at the 'fumbling baronets,' namely Hanmer the editor, and at the 'cankered critic,' who may be Thomas Rymer. There is the bitterer *Impromptu* at the cost of Henry Fox, first Lord Holland, 'old, and abandoned by each venal friend.' Gray would have been a formidable satirist, and his few sallies outlast all the poems of Churchill. Another sort of impromptu, 'There pipes the woodlark,' shows how jealously he saved up his phrases. The woodlark had already piped in a cancelled verse of the *Elegy* ; but Gray, 'walking in the spring

in the neighbourhood of Cambridge' with Norton Nicholls, heard it again, and added the words

> and the song-thrush there
> Scatters his loose notes in the waste of air.

Another copy of verses, 'Seeds of poetry and rhime,' once printed among Gray's doubtful works, is now known to be by Walpole, who justly describes it as an 'extempore jumble.'

XV

The notes that Gray added to the second edition (1768) of the Pindaric odes throw light on his poetic methods, and are of more than one kind. The prose argument and historical remarks are for the benefit of the ignorant and are a contemptuous reply to the charge of obscurity. 'Vocal to the intelligent alone; but for the many they need interpreters': so runs the Greek motto to the *Progress of Poesy*. The habit of extreme compression and allusiveness came to be identified with the handiwork of Gray; and it is one of his innovations, marking a break with the French, or the 'Queen Anne,' ideal of transparency and ease. We can imagine how Boileau would have censured him, and know how Johnson did so. Johnson is captious over Gray; but it is just as easy to be captious over Johnson's criticisms, for many of them are only too true. When he does not 'see that the *Bard* promotes any truth, moral or political,' we are tempted to give him up as a critic altogether; and also when we learn that '"Idalia's velvet-green" has something of cant.' But he hits the mark when he says of the lines on Shakespeare:

> What is said of that mighty genius is true; but it is not said happily; the real effects of this poetical power are put out of sight by the pomp of machinery;

and when he remarks that 'in all Gray's odes there is a kind of cumbrous splendour which we wish away.' Johnson wrote this more than twenty years after the publication of the Pindarics; and his language shows that they had been at first unpopular, but that he is now resisting their increased reputation. Several protests against his censure soon appeared; and Gray, in fact, had more or less taught the age to admire, if not to understand, the long odes. His explanatory notes are still useful, and are good reading.

With a different motive, he quotes many parallels from the poets to his own language and imagery. This he does partly for

honesty, and partly from a wish to forestall the critics; but, above all, as a silent vindication of his way of working. 'See,' he seems to say, 'how I write; my head is full of the poetry of five languages, the common stock of the world's imagination; I take my treasure where I find it; but I want to make it *mine*, and to fuse it all into one harmonious effect; and, if I had not told you (for this is the real test) of my sources, would you *then* call my ode a mosaic, or deny its unity of tone?' Gray, no doubt, is an extreme case of the poetic appropriator, going even further than Milton or Tennyson; but he is of their tribe, and he makes his procedure good.

The notes to the *Progress of Poesy* mention its debts to King David, Job, Ezekiel, Homer, Pindar, Phrynichus, Lucretius, Virgil, Petrarch, and Abraham Cowley. Yet the foundation for Gray's language and numbers is supplied by none of these, but by the masters, Milton and Dryden, whom he honours in the text. Dryden, whom he admired to the end, and whom he could scarcely bear to hear criticised, had hitherto been his chief model; but Gray is now aiming at a different kind of grandeur, and finds it in Milton; Dryden, with his 'less presumptuous car,' coming second, though only second. It is hard to trace in his language anything of Spenser, in spite of the statement of Mathias that

> Mr. Gray never sat down to compose any poem, without previously, and for a considerable time, reading the verses of Spenser.

But the faults and virtues of Gray are almost complementary to those of Spenser; he does not expand and flow, but stops and condenses; and there is a note of oratory in all his verse, which is foreign to Spenser altogether.

It is a nice question, and one to be faced, how far Gray marks an *advance* in the 'progress of poesy.' In one sense, the appearance of any true poet always marks an advance. New creations are born, and the world of art is the richer, and is never the same afterwards. But, more than this, Gray's writings mirror the change of taste, and the expansion of interests, which were occurring all around him, and to which—not being too far ahead of his time, but rather in the forefront of it—he himself contributes. At many a point he is a prophet unawares. As time passes, his sensibilities are enlarged; and, in answer to the call, his poetic moulds, and his rhythm and cast of language, undergo change. It has been noticed how the love of scenery grew upon him, a fact that his prose reveals better than his verse; and herein, plainly, he is a man of his age, of the

transition, and one who leads the way. Further, as he passes from the smaller to the larger ode, and makes his notes on Plato and Aristophanes, we see that his motto is that of Collins: 'revive the just designs of Greece!' Gray reflects in a powerful way the still nascent appreciation of the Greek genius, and the escape from the bondage to Latin. The love of Greece, and the love of nature—these are two very great things; they are keys to much of the poetry that was to come; and Gray, not indeed alone, but more than any other writer, held them both. To see it, we have only to contrast him in these respects with Johnson.

So we judge, with his writings before us; but in estimating his actual influence we must distinguish the poet from the scholar. For his poetry was printed in his lifetime and had its effect, while his learned memoranda and his letters were not. No one but a friend or two knew of his journal in the Lakes, or of his praise of Plato. And this consideration applies above all to Gray as a mediaevalist. Outside the *Bard* and the Welsh and Icelandic lays, the Middle Ages do not count for much in his verse. The Welsh interest did not take deep root in England, although, as we have seen, the Northern poems left their mark. And in the *Progress of Poesy* the Middle Ages do not figure at all, except for the footnotes. Gray, indeed, confesses more than one debt to Petrarch; and one also to Dante, for 'the knell of parting day.' Also he translates the story of Ugolino into blank verse, loosely enough, if with a true sense of Dante's power. But his poetry does not at all give his measure as a pioneer in mediaeval or in Greek studies.

The outlook is far wider when we turn to Gray's letters and to his piles of memoranda. They show, for one thing, the depth and reach of his Hellenism. Most of his notes are simply erudite, without literary comment, and we may regret that he so rarely breaks out. When he does so, it is for his own eye; and yet he writes as carefully as if for the press. He gives the argument of the *Republic*; and here is his comment on the *Phaedo*:

> The historical part of it is admirable, and, though written and disposed with all the art and management of the best tragick writer, (for the slightest circumstance in it wants not its force and meaning) it exhibits nothing to the eye but the noble simplicity of nature. Every intelligent reader will feel what those who were eye-witnesses are said to have felt, namely [a certain mixture compounded of pleasure and pain] . . . The innocence, the humanity, the cheerfulness, and the unaffected intrepidity of Socrates, will draw some tears from him (as it did many from them) as for the loss of a father; and

will, at the same time, better than any arguments, shew him a soul, which, if it were not so, at least deserved to be immortal.

Gray tells the story of the *Birds* of Aristophanes with all his own gaiety and lightness, in one of his best pieces of prose ; and we can only be sorry that he could not teach literature at Cambridge instead of holding a sinecure and silent chair of history. It may not be much to say ; but he had the makings of a heaven-born professor ; and the ruthless kindness with which he blue-pencilled the compositions of Mason ought to have been, but was not, an education to the pupil.

He is also a true explorer of the Middle Ages ; far more so than his poetry discloses. He was alien to much in the mediaeval spirit ; he does not seem to care for its mysticism, its speculation, or its more intimate feeling. Gray was too much a man of his time for that. But he knew more about the English poetry written after 1300 than any one except Thomas Warton and Tyrwhitt. He saw that one of the clues to literary history is the development of metre ; he was the first to attempt a minute classification of English measures ; and had some idea of the old alliterative verse. His account of the origins of English rhyme belongs to the same chapter. The essay on Lydgate is in tone and method very like a scholarly modern *causerie*, and shows what his projected history of English poetry [1] might have been like.

This he had planned to write in concert with Mason. Pope's sketch for such a history came into his hands, and prompted his own. The real story was to begin with Chaucer ; but there was to be a prelude, embodying the Middle English material, and also specimens of verse from other mediaeval tongues. These, presumably, would have been translations, since Gray tells us they were to have included his two Norse odes. But by 1768 he had long dropped the enterprise, especially on hearing that Thomas Warton was at work. In 1770 he sends Warton his scheme, wondering whether ' it corresponds in anything with your own plan.' Warton replies praising the programme, and explains its differences from his own. We must share Warton's ' regret that a writer of your consummate taste should not have executed it.' Gray's summary of his chapter headings is very remarkable, though it contains, in the light of our present knowledge, some false perspectives. Had he continued, the mere process of reading must have brought him right. Following Pope, he thinks overmuch in terms of ' schools ' ; he will have it that a ' third Italian school ' begat Donne, Cleveland,

and Sprat ; and it would be hard to pack a half-truth into fewer words than these :

> Part V. School of France, introduced after the Restoration. Waller, Dryden, Addison, Prior, and Pope—which has continued to our own times.

But what would we not give for Gray's account of Chaucer's 'character and merits at large, the different kinds in which he excelled' ; for his ideas on the *Faerie Queene* ; and, more than all, for his pages on the poets who inspired himself ?

These, as I have said, were pre-eminently the writers of the preceding hundred years. Gray has several echoes of Shakespeare ; but no poet of our Renaissance except Milton really helped to mould his style. Broadly, what he did was to take all that appealed to him in the manner of Milton, and all that appealed to him in the manner of Dryden and of Dryden's followers, and to blend it into something of his own ; to *translate*, so to speak, into this idiom, or rather into successive forms of it, whatever he wished to say. We must not, then, think of him too much as a rebel against the verse of his period or a forestaller of later poetry. He did not so regard himself, and would hardly have been so much honoured in his lifetime had he been so regarded. It is clear how in each instance—in his large odes, in his little odes, in his exotic pieces, in his *Elegy*—he did not stand alone. There was not much new or strange about Gray's work except its excellence. He was felt not to have broken with existing traditions but to have worked within them in a fresh original way. He was followed at once by imitators ; and the real new birth of poetry which is heralded by Smart and Chatterton, as we now see, more clearly than it is by Gray, began within fifteen years of his death, with Blake and Cowper. What Gray, as an artist, truly bequeathed was something which the next age began to forget, and which marks him as belonging to his own : and this is his passion for structure and finish ; for proportion, economy, and unity ; in a word, for *line*, for the ideal that we can call, in every sense of the word, classical.

XVI

His much-debated saying that 'the language of the age is never the language of poetry' is true of himself. This is evident, the moment that we turn from his poems to his letters. Here there is no lapidary work, and the language is not studied or elaborate. Gray does not write like Johnson, who feels that he

is a responsible person, and that every sentence, however simple, must pass the Mint. His style shows natural breeding, and therefore it is not over-ceremonious. He may address strangers in the mannerly style, and is their humble obedient servant; but to friends he signs much as we do, with pleasant turns of his own: 'remember me to all that remember there is such a person'; or, 'Heaven keep you all! I am, my best Mr. Chute, very faithfully yours.' There is no trace in the letters of 'cumbrous splendour.' The usual tone is ironic and playful, but a warmth of affection is always breaking through. The letters to the young Swiss Bonstetten startle us with their force of sentiment. Gray, who was to die in the next year, felt lonely and gloomy; Bonstetten had brought him 'a temporary gleam of sunshine,' and is told that 'my life now is but a conversation with your shadow.' But this mood is rare. The youthful letters to Walpole are light, and not always agreeable, and too like Walpole; it is rather unfair to quote them. Some are brilliant; there is an account of a Cambridge orgy, with the company not only smoking but chewing tobacco, and Gray sitting it out, disgusted but amused in a Smollettesque way. But the letters written to Walpole after the reconciliation are among the best. Like many secluded men, Gray relished a whiff of gossip from Vanity Fair. We hear of scandals and duels, tales of Lady Mary Montagu, and of Lord Peterborough's canary; and Gray shares Walpole's interest in the history and furniture of great houses and in the affairs of their inmates. Further, he is the *savant*, antiquary, and naturalist; and he is ever the craftsman in words, and corrects the slacker prose of Walpole. He wanders from one thing to another, and a single instance may be given of his variety.

In July 1760 he congratulates Wharton on the birth of a son:

> I am persuaded the whole matter is to have always something going forward. Happy they, that can create a rose-tree, or erect a honeysuckle, that can watch the brood of a hen, or see a fleet of their own ducklings launch into the water. It is with a sentiment of envy I speak it, who shall never have even a thatched roof of my own, nor gather a strawberry but in Covent Garden.

Then he tells of his trip in Oxfordshire with 'Madam Speed,' the lady to whom rumour absurdly wished to marry him. He adds that he is going to Cambridge, and that so too is 'that owl Fobus,' namely the Duke of Newcastle, for whom he did not care; and he touches on French politics, and on the expedition to Quebec. Next he reasons concerning Macpherson's *Ossian*,

in which he long wished to believe, but which puzzled him to the end; and he pointedly puts the familiar dilemma: 'in short, this man is the very Daemon of poetry, or he has lighted on a treasure hid for ages.' Next he cheerfully quotes Colman's skit on the Pindaric odes; and comments on *Tristram Shandy* and on Sterne's sermons, 'in which you often see him tottering on the verge of laughter, and ready to throw his periwig in the face of his audience.' Lastly, after a page of the floral chronology which, like John Stuart Mill, he was fond of compiling ('almond out of bloom, and spreading its leaves,' etc.), he stops short with the sentence, 'I believe there is no fear of war with Spain.'

XVII

The letters are sown with remarks, of a casual informal kind, upon books and writers. They must be read along with Gray's learned notes if we are to judge of his gift as a critic. He does not deal much in the philosophy of poetry, and finds that Aristotle is dry, 'like chopped hay,' despite his 'abundance of fine uncommon things.' He speaks as a deeply read connoisseur and taster, and we can trace his preferences among the Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and English authors. His opinions are formed neither on theory nor on the views of others; they are all at first hand, and he is singularly free from the superstitions of his age. His pronouncements of writers, if collected, would not fill many pages, but they contain much gold. The best of them are eulogies of some one whom he is reading and admiring at the moment. The weight of Gray's mind is seen in his commendations of Machiavelli, 'who to me appears one of the wisest men that any nation in any age has produced,' and of Tacitus; for what can be better said than this?

A man who could join the *brilliant* of wit and concise sententiousness peculiar to that age, with the truth and gravity of better times, and the deep reflection and good sense of the best moderns, cannot choose but to have something to strike you. Yet what I admire in him above all this, is his detestation of tyranny, and the high spirit of liberty that every now and then breaks out, as it were, whether he would or no.

He speaks more fully on French and English writers of his own or recent times. He likes reading Marivaux and Crébillon. He takes the sympathetic view of Madame de Maintenon; he adores Racine, and writes to Wharton:

I don't know what to say to you with regard to Racine; it sounds

to me as if anybody should fall upon Shakespeare, who indeed lies infinitely more open to criticism of all kinds, but I should not care to be the person that undertook it. If you don't like Athaliah, or Britannicus, there is no more to be said. I have done.

All this shows much freedom of mind ; and moreover Gray can see beyond his own prejudices. His temper was conservative, or rather Whiggish, and he did not like Voltaire, though he found him entertaining. He liked Rousseau almost as little—a curious point of contact with Dr. Johnson ; but he is just to *Emile*, and remarks :

I think he has observed children with more attention, and knows their meaning and the working of their little passions better than any other writer.

Gray's study of Montesquieu, and his taste for the light neat lyrics of Jean-Baptiste-Louis Gresset, two authors who almost represent the extremes of the French mind, appear in his letters ; and indeed, like Chesterfield and Hume and Gibbon and Walpole, he takes a notable place in the history, not attempted here, of the French influence during this period. Of another kind is his account of Homer as the ' father of *circumstance*,' by which is meant the artist's choice of essentials, as distinct from a train of weary detail :

Circumstance ever was, and ever will be, the life and the essence both of oratory and of poetry. It has in some sort the effect upon every mind that it has upon that of the populace ; but I fear the quickness and delicate impatience of these polished times, in which we live, are but the forerunners of the decline of all those beautiful arts which depend upon the imagination.

We need not build too much on the words, or fancy that the soul of Gray was chilled in ' these polished times,' when transient satires and reasonings in verse were on every stall ; he dealt in those commodities himself ; but he seems, even while sitting apart in his library, to have felt that the age did not favour the leisure of the spirit, or a slow-conceiving art like his own. There is, perhaps, thus much of truth in the view that Gray ' never spoke out.' But he does speak out, as a critic ; and glances at many an English writer of the day : running with a light sharp pen over Dodsley's *Collection*, reading Anstey's *New Bath Guide* and Boswell's book on Corsica, and saying truly of Matthew Green that ' even his woodnotes often break out into strains of real poetry and music.' But none of them touch him deeply ; in the end he comes back to the ancients, to Plato and Thucy-

dides ; of whose seventh book, on the retreat from Syracuse, he exclaims : ' is it, or is it not, the finest thing you ever read in your life ? '

XVIII

Gray's feeling for natural beauty comes out early in his letters. In 1736 he visited Burnham Beeches ; and, though the *Seasons* were now well known, this kind of sensibility was by no means as yet common property. We hear of the beeches,

that, like most ancient people, are always dreaming out their old stories to the winds

> And, as they bow their hoary tops, relate
> In murm'ring sounds the dark decrees of Fate ;
> While visions, as poetic eyes avow,
> Cling to each leaf, and swarm on every bough.

The verse, though good, is in the fashion ; it may or may not be Gray's own ; but the prose might be that of a modern Irish singer. Later comes the foreign tour, and we read the familiar eloquent passages describing the Chartreuse and the Falls of Tivoli and Genoa and Naples. Gray, like most travellers then, shrank from mountains ; he was afterwards to visit Gordale Scar ' not without shuddering,' and to see that the crags of Lodore ' impend terribly.' But he was always alive to the aspect and the sound of water ; and at the Chartreuse, he says, ' it seemed to have a cadence like verse.' ' An epithet or metaphor drawn from Art,' says Johnson sternly, ' degrades Nature ' ; but Gray knew better. If we compare these notes with the travels of Addison or Lady Mary in Italy, we see how they announce that slow unsealing of the poetic senses which was one of the chief spiritual events of the century. For the rest of his days Gray watches England, or rather Britain, and we trace his growing delight in her landscapes. Warwick, the Channel at Dover, and the road between York and Doncaster, and Strath Tay, all move him to speech. English rivers, he says, ' glide and whisper.' The *Journal in the Lakes* shows a quickened eye for colour, which in the year 1769 was still remarkable. Gray writes very like Dorothy Wordsworth :

a pleasant grave day, perfectly calm and warm, but without a gleam of sunshine. Then, the sky seeming to thicken, the valley to grow more desolate, and evening drawing on, returned by the way I came to Penrith. . . . Saddleback, whose furrowed sides were gilt by noonday sun, while its brow appeared of a sad purple from the

shadow of the clouds, as they sailed slowly by it. The broad and green valley of Gardies and Lowside, with a swift stream glittering among the cottages and meadows, lay to the left.

Such passages are not set compositions, and there is no idea of making a prose lyric, or *poème*, out of a landscape, in the manner of Ruskin or of Richard Jefferies. The descriptions are generally embedded in something else, and grow out of observations on the crops, or the weather, or the soil. Calendars of flowers abound in the letters, and Gray was an assiduous botanist and entomologist. He hunted insects himself in Hyde Park and Marylebone, keeping notes. He was an amateur, if we may use the word of so minute an observer; in the sense that he worked simply for his private pastime, and with no idea of publishing the result or of 'adding to knowledge.' In this spirit he studied natural history, much as he did genealogies or the history of music. It amused him to describe the orders of insects in Latin hexameters. His copy of Linnæus's[1] *Systema Naturae* is preserved, with marginal notes and illustrations, we are told, 'on almost every page of the two volumes.' Some of his delicate drawings, of the hoopoe, of the ichneumon fly, of the swallow-tail butterfly, and of the stag-beetle, have been reproduced; and we have his Latin account of the woodlark, who is heard of in his verse:

Gregatim volitando cantillat; cantus liquidus, varius, suavissimus, soli Lusciniae cedens. Arboribus insidet, primo vere et per autumnum integrum praecipue canora. [Flies in flocks, sings a low note; the song clear, changeful, and very sweet; second only to the Nightingale. Perches on trees; is specially tuneful in early spring and throughout autumn.]

And of the rabbit with his young:

e terra primum prodeuntes pater agnoscit, salutat, lingua manibusque demulcet [when they first come out of the ground, he knows them, greets them, and with tongue and paws soothes them down].

All this curiously contrasts with Gray's English poetry, where the scenery is mostly general. There are a few trees and a few birds, and a droning beetle; but the flowers seem to be all in the plural; and I cannot find that any besides the violet and the 'breathing rose' are mentioned by their names. Perhaps it is as well; a greater 'Dutch exactness' might not have suited the broad and gentle effects intended; and the 'five young unborn' of Keats's 'chuckling linnet' belong to another kind of art.

The 'minute particulars' are kept for his prose; and, in the last May of his life, we find Gray writing from Jermyn Street:

> It is here the height of Summer, but with all the bloom and tender verdure of Spring. At Cambridge the laurustines and arbutus killed totally; apricots, almonds, and figs lost all their young shoots.

XIV

Old-fashion-plates have their interest, and so have the verses of William Mason[1] (1725-1797), Canon of York, and the biographer of Gray. They are seldom to be read for pleasure; but they are a document in the history of poetic taste and of literary society. In one respect Mason reverses the usual course of development, for he began, on the whole, with romance and ended with satire; but he was always liable to indulge in both. His youthful *Isis* is a sally, aimed from Cambridge, against the Jacobites of Oxford. *Musæus* (1747) is a monody on Pope, 'in imitation of *Lycidas*'; and the titles of *Il Bellicoso* and *Il Pacifico*, which followed, tell their own tale. Then came a string of odes, irregular, stanzaic, Pindaric, some of which were collected in 1756. Late in life Mason made others, which include one paraphrasing a chapter of Job, one to Pitt, and a *Palinodia* containing the words 'Hence, abhorred Democracy!' There is more semblance of poetry in the plays *Elfrida* (1752) and *Caractacus* (1759), which fall into their place among the crowd of quasi-historical tragedies. The *English Garden* (1772-81), a long discursive affair in blank verse, is of interest as reflecting that rage for 'natural' landscape-making, which in fact meant an endeavour to make nature pictorial. Mason, however, has a true feeling for the beauty of a scene thus 'composed,' with a due allowance of ruins. He also made some sonnets, of which the best are those written late in life; and one, on his birthday, February 23, has a happy overture:

> In the long course of seventy years and one
> Oft have I known on thee, my natal day,
> Hoar frost and sweeping snow prolong their sway,
> The wild winds whistle, and the forests groan;
> But now Spring's smile hath veiled stern Winter's frown,
> And now the birds on every budding spray
> Chaunt orisons as to the month of May.
> With them all fear of seasons' change is flown;
> Like them I sing, but not, like them, beguiled
> Expect the vernal bloom of youth to know. . . .

From 1773 to 1777 Mason poured out a series of anonymous

satires, rough in form but often animated, which made a noise at the time, and which were admired by Walpole. He was in the secret, and was for a time supposed to be the writer. His annotations, which have been saved and reprinted, are more pointed than the poems, and like them are full of scornful strokes against Johnson, Smollett, Mallet, Macpherson (termed by Mason 'MacHomer'), and other persons. The *Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers*, and another to the political hack John Shebbeare, seem the best conceived of these productions. Mason's letters to Gray show his pleasanter and more humane side ; and in spite of his misdealings with Gray's correspondence he must have the credit, not only of hero-worship, but of having devised the form of biography which Boswell perfected. Middleton's *Life of Cicero*, where the letters of the orator are interwoven in the story, has sometimes been mentioned as a precedent ; but it is a mosaic of another kind.

CHAPTER XV

POETRY AFTER 1760

I

By chance, the accession of George the Third coincides with a turning of the page, and almost with a new chapter, in the history of our poetry. The instinct for pure lyric found, what it had long been seeking, expression in fresh fields. The impulse came from the past; it was essentially literary in origin; and of that past the Middle Ages were only a portion. The four names of Macpherson, Smart, Percy, and Chatterton meet us during the years 1760 to 1770; and their work shows this change in diverse ways. It was felt only dimly and confusedly at the time, though we see it clearly at this distance; and the righting of each of these reputations was to be a long process. Macpherson, with his *Fragments* (1760), came earliest; and the 'Ossianic' poems, accepted at first as true antiques, seemed much more splendid and precious even than Percy's *Reliques* (1765). They had a long life, and European fame; but the interest which they quickened in old Celtic literature was in the end, when better instructed, to turn against them. They ceased to satisfy, and their epitaph was to be pronounced by Matthew Arnold. Smart's *Song to David* (1763), which came next after the *Fragments*, was all but ignored (except, as we have seen, by Boswell in one of his unexpected flashes); although for us it is one of the great lyrics of the language. The inspiration here was Oriental; with Percy and Chatterton it was partly, though by no means wholly, mediaeval. The true popular ballad, which had already been studied, was freshly revealed, and that with far-reaching effects, by the *Reliques*. It was hailed as a refreshment, and profusely imitated; but it could not yet be properly valued, or even defined. It was treated, at the best, as ore rather than as gold, and as requiring modern skill and polite tinkering to make it acceptable. The *Reliques*, however, also brought much good Elizabethan song out of obscurity. Last came Chatterton, whose *Rowley Poems* stand fast and are now acknowledged to be, in the main, the

central line of English lyric. At the moment they were only valued in a bewildered way, partly owing to the state of taste, and partly because critical judgment was deflected by the dispute over the authorship. Chatterton dying in 1770, poetry for the next ten years was somewhat at a stand; and the position was barely saved by Beattie with his *Minstrel* (1771, 1774), although the pleasant, lesser verse, not of the high poetic order, continued to be written. Cowper, however, had begun to make his lighter rhymes; and in 1779 came his *Olney Hymns*. The next seven years were to see Crabbe's *Library*, and his *Village* (1783); *Table Talk*, and the *Task* (1785); *Poetical Sketches* (1783); and *Poems chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (1786); but that new birth of poetry lies beyond our limits. It may, however, be remembered that with none of these writers (with the partial exception of Burns) does the prompting come from the Middle Ages; nor yet, save in *Poetical Sketches*, from the Elizabethans; and that in Blake's *Songs of Innocence* (1789) the echoes of that older lyric have almost vanished. The mediaeval strain was to reappear in Coleridge and Scott. It is the Middle Ages with a difference; but the *Mariner* has, of course, the popular ballad behind it; the *Border Minstrelsy* marked, in eighteenth-century language, the next 'aera' to the *Reliques*; and the manner of Scott's *Lays* had been just anticipated, as remarked already, by Thomas Warton—not to mention Chatterton's canto of the *Unknown Knight*.

II

Often the poet and his song are alike betossed by fortune; and the career of Christopher Smart [1] (1722-1771) is a case in point. He might have seemed, when he died in the King's Bench, to be a typical wastrel of letters, who had never made good his undeniable talent. A classical scholar and a Cambridge Fellow, Smart had begun well in a conventional way; he won a number of prizes for sacred poetry; but his successive works upon the attributes of the Deity are seldom readable. He also made (1756) a prose version of the whole of Horace, 'for the use of those who are desirous of acquiring or recovering a competent knowledge of the Latin language'; and it was used, by those so desirous, for many generations. Later, in 1767, he published a translation of Horace in verse, now aiming, he tells us, at echoing the poet's *curiosa felicitas*, and also at reproducing

the beauty, force, and vehemence of *impression* . . . a talent or gift of Almighty God, by which a genius is empowered to throw an

emphasis upon a word or sentence in such wise, that it cannot escape any reader of sheer good sense and true critical sagacity.

This is the right spirit, and Smart was a humanist in his own fashion ; he gives his instances from Homer, and Virgil, and the scriptures. And indeed there are happy turns and rhythms in his rendering of the Odes ; but he does best in the *pedestris sermo*, which he turns into octosyllabic rhymes, taking special pains over the *Ars Poetica*. Smart also translated Phaedrus into verse and prose, and made many satires, fables, odes, and miscellaneous verses of his own. Also, at various times, he wrote many contributions in the *Student* (Ch. III.) and other periodicals. In 1752 and 1763 he published volumes of *Poems* ; in 1763, *A Song to David*, by itself ; and in 1765, the year of the *Reliques*, came out his *Translation of the Psalms of David, attempted in the Spirit of Christianity*. To this the *Song*, with only small typographical changes, is appended. In the same volume are his *Hymns*, some of which, such as *Epiphany* and the *Presentation of Christ in the Temple*, have their own beauty, and also that touch of oddness which in Smart is inseparable from the beauty. But meanwhile he had fallen on evil days, and into debt and insanity. Twice he had to be taken under care ; he recovered, and came abroad again ; but he ended in the debtors' prison. A fuller edition of his original verse appeared in 1791, with a memoir ; but without the *Song to David*, which seemed too crazy for the age of Erasmus Darwin. Smart long shared, in a fuller measure and for somewhat different reasons, the obscurity of Blake. Anderson and Chalmers, not looking very far, could only find a scrap of the *Song* for their collection of his poems. It was reissued, separately, in 1819, again to be hardly noticed until it was dredged up and violently praised by Rossetti and his generation. Later still, Browning in his *Parleyings* compared it to a gorgeous and glowing chapel hidden by a rubble of masonry.

The *Song*, while it stands above everything else of Smart's, does not stand alone ; and Browning's simile is less than fair to the poet. The lines on *A Bed of Guernsey Lilies*, and those on *An Eagle confined in a College Court*, appear in some modern anthologies ; and there is a pleasant forecast of *Songs of Innocence* in the *Hymn for the Haymakers*, where

> the rural Graces three
> Dance beneath yon maple-tree.

Smart also had a pretty turn for rhyming fables, a species which in the eighteenth century is not less dreary than abundant.

Madam and the Magpie, or *The Brocaded Gown and Linen Rag*, while far from La Fontaine or Krylov, are quite as good as the *Fables* of Gay. The swaggering gown is reminded of its final fate by the humble rag. It will decline into a beggar's cloak, and so rot ; but the rag will be cleaned, and turned into paper :

> Then shall the sons of Genius join
> To make my second life divine.

These sons will include Collins, ' Melpomene's selected friend ' ; and

> Perhaps our great Augustan Gray
> Will greet me with a Doric lay.

We may regret that Smart did not leave us more work like this, and less of the *Hilliad*. That satire is not without flashes, but it is expended upon an unworthy subject, the notorious John Hill. The *Hop-Garden* is a Georgic of the conventional sort. But as a religious poet Smart stands alone.

His devotion is ardent ; but his merely pious writing is commonplace ; and he kindles into poetry when his idea turns into an image. He is moved by the strangeness and glory of natural things, as they are seen in his dream, or through the eyes of the Hebrews : by the hues of exotic fruits and birds, or of fish with mysterious names, or of jewels and precious metals. All these are the works of the Lord, and bless the Lord. Even in the unpromising *Hymn to the Supreme Being*, amid the stock phrases and characteristically vague grammar, there is poetic emotion :

> Chief of metallic forms is regal gold ;
> Of elements, the liquid fount that flows ;
> Give me, 'mongst gems, the brilliant to behold ;
> O'er Flora's flock imperial is the rose ;
> Over all birds the sovereign eagle soars ;
> And monarch of the field the lordly lion roars.

But the real storehouse for the imagery and cadences of the *Song* was (besides the Bible generally) Smart's own paraphrase of the Psalms. In a note appended to the *Song* he announces his proposals for printing that work, and states that a 'specimen' of it can be seen. There is also the strongest internal evidence that he wrote many of his Psalms before the *Song*, and that he sat down to compose it, in a mood of ecstatic thanksgiving, with their phrases and rhythms ringing in his brain. He had often used the ancient six-line measure, and had already imparted to it his own peculiar triumphal throb and rise and fall, so remote from the movement of Collins's *Ode to Peace* in the same metre.

And often, in the very Psalms where he uses it, just as in the *Song*, he celebrates the colours of the world and the inscrutable life of its creatures. Sometimes, while the vision and the sound are there, the measure is different, as in the hundred and forty-eighth Psalm :

> Batt'ring hail, and fires that glow ;
> Streaming vapours, plumy snow ;
> Wind and storm his wrath incurred
> Winged and pointed at his word.

But in the twenty-ninth the metre is that of the *Song* :

> The voice of God in anger drives
> The tempest to the mark, and rives
> The cedar-trees in twain ;
> Yea, Lebanon with all his growth
> Is rifted, when the Lord is wroth,
> And strawn along the plain.

And so in the hundred and fourth :

> The feathered families of air
> Contrive their cunning fabrics there,
> What time the sexes mix ;
> The storks for elevation seek
> To loftier firs, with bolder beak
> Their pensile house to fix.

It may be surmised that this *Benedicite* was actually the first inspiration of the *Song* ; it abounds in similar effects, and there is the same strain of rapture.

These versions are not in the least literal, but are, to use Smart's term, 'exercises'; and of such exercises the *Song* itself is, as he explains, a carefully ordered sequence. The scheme is his own, and unique, and thoroughly effective. There is one series 'upon the seasons, and the right use of them,' and another 'upon the senses, and how to subdue them.' The last fifteen verses he calls an 'amplification in five degrees,' a term that suits the peculiar build of the poem. He makes each verse or series of verses the text for some keyword or epithet, which may be repeated at the opening of each stanza, and even, by way of climax, at that of each line. One such series is formed by

> Great, valiant, pious, good, and clean,
> Sublime, contemplative, serene,
> Strong, constant, pleasant, wise !

Another, that with the 'five degrees,' runs *Sweet, sweeter* ; *Strong, stronger*, and so on, up to *Glorious, more glorious* ; and there the *Song* culminates. The most pictorial group is com-

posed on the repeated note of *Adoration* ; and the strangest, on the ' seven pillars of the temple,' Alpha to Omega. There are plenty of lapses in the *Song* ; and we are disconcerted when ' Sigma presents the social droves ' ; but the music helps to carry the weaker parts through ; and the touch of incoherence, which may or may not suggest Smart's infirmity, is essential to the total impression. So, too, is the cunning disposition of unusual names. There are perfumes like galbanum, and ' thyine,' or fragrant, ' woods ' ; and creatures like the ' gier-eagle,' and the xiphias, or swordfish ; and also silver trout (or bream), and carp who are no longer homely :

> And, by the coasting reader spied,
> The silverlings and crusions glide
> For ADORATION gilt.

This is inspiring after a course of Grainger's *Sugar-Cane,* or Smart's own *Hop-Garden,* or the ' piscatory eclogues ' of a former time. Perhaps he had to be not quite himself, if he was to forget the classics, and the canons, and the fixed epithet, and the counsels of moderation, and the whole dead weight of contemporary taste, and, hardest of all, his own experiments in the usual forms. He is not carving nutshells, or celebrating Chloe, but crying ' Hosanna' to the inner chorus of ' hallelujahs and harping symphonies.' And his diction, for all its numberless biblical echoes, has often a very unbiblical ring :

> The nectarine his strong tint imbibes,
> And apples of ten thousand tribes,
> And quick peculiar quince.

Between Norris of Bemerton, the last of the poetic mystics, and Blake, there is no one else except Chatterton who lives, though it be only for an hour, in a visionary world so much his own, or who is carried so clean away from earth in the very act of chanting her glories.

III

The original verse of Dr. Thomas Percy [1] (1729-1811), the friend of Johnson, Goldsmith, and Shenstone, editor of the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,* and latterly Bishop of Dromore, contributes little to poetry. His pretty piece *Nancy,* though by no means wholly original in idea, is to be remembered ; but the popular and mawkish *Hermit of Warkworth* does him little good. An antiquarian, collector, and translator, Percy was the cause of poetry in others, and a dis-

coverer of treasure. As it happened, his achievement was to spread the knowledge of folk-ballad and romance and to rescue noble specimens of both. This was his luck, and he used it well; his doctoring of the texts probably made his appeal more immediate. But, like Gray, he cared for *all* poetry; he only asked that it should be unfamiliar; and his idea was to collect examples of it and make them known, and presentable, in an English dress. He wished, as he wrote to Evans in 1764,

> to exhibit specimens of the poetry of various nations in a series of literal translations. Some Chinese poetry I published some time ago was the first. My Runic was the second. Solomon's Song as a sample of Hebrew poetry is the third. Your Welsh poetry carries on the same design. I have *in petto* Arabic poetry, Greenland poetry, Lapland poetry, North American, Peruvian, etc., etc., etc.

Gray in his note to the *Progress of Poesy* says, 'See the Erse, Norwegian, and Welsh fragments, the Lapland and American songs.' His interest is of the same kind as Percy's. In fact it was the 'Erse,' namely Macpherson's 'Ossian,' that carried away the public, at first far more than Percy's ballads; but these, in the long run, easily won the race. Gray's stanza, 'In climes beyond the solar road,' prophesies a yet wider exploration, which the enthusiasm of Herder and Goethe for popular, remote, or exotic poetry was soon to initiate. Percy's specimens of Chinese verse, which came through the French of Du Halde and others, are often happy: this is 'on a person sailing home after a long absence':

> The heart, eagerly bent, fleets to the mark, like an arrow.
> The bark runneth along the water, swifter than the shuttle
> Over the loom of a weaver who is in haste to finish his work.

These pieces occur, along with Chinese proverbs, and the 'argument' of a play, as an appendix to *Hau Kiou Choaan,*[1] *or a Pleasing History* (1761), a novel (long and insipid, it must be said) which is a 'translation from the Chinese language.' The version had been made in part by a Mr. Wilkinson, and partly in Portuguese; and its history, as well as Percy's exact procedure, is not clear. His language reads as though he had mended Wilkinson's English, and had translated the Portuguese part himself. As usual, he did not give his name; nor, again, did he do so in the *Miscellaneous Pieces relating to the Chinese* (1762). Here Percy provides more examples, and the text (again from the French) of another play; he also discourses on the ideograms, over which he seems to have puzzled awhile. In the *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry translated from the Islandic Language* (1763) he

is more definite. The attempt, he says, ' is due to the success of the Erse fragments,' of which he hints that the ' translator ' may probably deserve all the credit. He subjoins original texts of the *Incantation of Hervor*, the *Dying Ode of Regner Lodbrog*, and the rest, and explains, more or less clearly, what Latin versions he used for his own. These are in prose, and are well enough worded. He finds that the Old Norse poetry ' chiefly displays itself in images of terror,' and that ' no compositions abound with more laboured metaphors or more studied refinements.' The *Five Pieces*, as we have seen, belong to the posy of which Gray's Norse odes are the flower ; the ' Erse poems ' long obscured it ; but Percy's translation (1770) of P. H. Mallet's work (now entitled *Northern Antiquities*), with notes of his own appended, made the old verse much better known. Another, a yet more carefully anonymous, production of Percy's was the *Matrons* (1762), a string of ' six short histories ' ; the matrons being widows all too rapidly consoled, Greek, Roman, British, and Chinese. The Ephesian story is told twice ; once from Petronius, and once, with peculiarly horrible variations, of a ' Turkish ' lady. The professed aim of the book is hortatory ; Percy was already a vicar ; but his chaplaincy to the Duke of Northumberland was still to come, and perhaps his anonymity was just as well.

IV

This catholicity of liking, not always very critical, yet none the less lucky for posterity, is fully reflected in the *Reliques*. The ballads and romances which made the fortune of the book do not form the larger part of it, and gave wider circulation to the rest. Percy's service in unearthing half-forgotten songs from books hard of access was very great, though less original, or far-reaching in its effects, than his publication of the ballads. The metal, like that in the ballads themselves, is of varying purity ; but the *Reliques* are a noble anthology from the Tudor and early Stuart poets, and from Scottish as well as English lyric. There is *Waly, waly*, and Henryson's *Robene and Makyne*, and allegory from Hawes ; and lyric, again, from Lyly, Raleigh, Daniel, and Drayton (much of whose work had been republished, with a *Life*, in 1748).

Some of the romances and ballads in the *Reliques* were taken from books, but the majority were in the famed MS. belonging to Humphrey Pitt of Shifnal. All the best species are well represented. Some pieces, indeed, like the *Heir of Linne* or *King*

John and the Abbot, are on the level of what Percy calls a 'low or subordinate correctness,' excellent in their kind. Among the greater examples are some based on history, such as the *Battle of Otterbourne*; or, like *Edom o' Gordon*, upon actual but private feuds. The English outlaw cycle is represented by *Adam Bell*; and romance in ballad dress, by *King Estmere* and *Sir Gawain*. Here, too, unspoilt, is the best version of *Sir Patrick Spens*; and, in a rank apart, the *Not-Browne Mayde*, also in good condition. Percy must have all the credit for what he spared. Nor were all of his changes unpardonable. 'He pomatumed,' says Furnivall,[1] 'the *Heir of Linne* till it shone again'; but in point of fact, as scholars have noticed, he took a hint from the *Drunkard's Legacy*, a dismal production, introduced the *halter* which leads to the hidden wealth, and made 'a new ballad, and a very good one,' which has deservedly passed current. But his general procedure with the ballads was viciously exposed by Ritson, who exclaims, in his *Engleish Metrical Romanceës* (1802), 'scarcely one single poem, song, or ballad, fairly or honestly printed.' This was after Ritson had been forced to withdraw his charge that the MS. was an invention of the editor. What Percy really did was made clear when Hales and Furnivall in 1867-8 printed the long-occulted MS. in full. Percy had not used more than a quarter of it, and what he used he cut down, eked out, or altered at his pleasure. He regarded himself, says Hales, as 'a kind of tireman' for the old ballads; and he did no little harm by confusing, nay tainting, the general conception of the ballad style. In the edition of 1794, nominally produced by his nephew, he frequently corrected his earlier versions from the MS.; but the harm was done. Percy's point of view, however, must be allowed for; and no doubt the ballads would have been less read if he had been faithful to the texts.

He did not really respect the ballad-mongers in the way that Dryden respected Chaucer. Dryden saw Chaucer's greatness, but thought his language obsolete, and was not in a position to scan his lines or hear his melodies; so he turned his poetry into poetry of another kind, inferior and yet in its way genuine. Percy thought many of the ballads, though containing admirable things, unpresentable as they stood and in the nature of curiosities. Later in life he wrote to George Paton that he had gathered still more material, but left it to his son to publish if so disposed; he himself, he says, has 'not quite the same relish for those little amusing literary sallies as I did fourteen or fifteen years ago.' His correspondence with Shenstone on the subject, from 1761 to 1763, the year of Shenstone's death,

throws light on his attitude. Shenstone has the finer taste; there is point in his quaint remark:

> With the common people I believe a song becomes a ballad as it grows in years, as they think an old serpent becomes a dragon, or an old Justice a Justice of Quorum.

But Shenstone is for ever anxious that the 'vessel' shall not be 'loaded with obsolete pieces'; if there is too much 'ballast,' it will only sink. And Percy, after taking counsel with Johnson, decides that he will 'not easily suffer two long ditties to come together.' As to alterations, Shenstone suggests that small ones need not be notified, but that perhaps entire lines, or more, from Percy's pen, might well be indicated by italics—a counsel that was not followed. The public, in fact, must be *tempted* to read the old poems, and these must be spaced out, improved, and relieved by more tasteful matter. The peculiar arrangement of the *Reliques* in three books, each with its three sections, is partly explained by these discussions: 'proceed,' says Shenstone, 'from the older to the newer ballads in *every distinct volume.*'

In making his changes, in padding out *Sir Cauline* or the *Child of Elle*, Percy only followed the tradition of Allan Ramsay and others. After all, the ballads had no known authors; the editor was only the last of a long line, and had as good a claim as the rest to write poetry. If Percy's handiwork had been like that of Scott in the *Minstrelsy*, he would have a better defence; but what was wrong with him was his insensibility to the true ballad style and its virtues. This is well seen in his avowed compositions, the *Hermit of Warkworth* and the *Friar of Orders Gray*. The latter poem is put forward honestly as a mosaic from Shakespeare's songs, 'with a few supplemental stanzas to connect them together and form them into a little tale.' The tale is adroitly enough laced together; but the effect is the same as in the lines imputed to Collins, 'Young Damon to the vale is fled': by the side of 'Sigh no more, lady,' comes

> Yet stay, fair lady, turn again,
> And dry those pearly tears.

The pieces in the *Reliques*, 'some few of later date,' include both better and worse examples of the same industry, which had begun early in the century. There is Tickell's *Colin and Lucy*, Grainger's West India ballad, *Bryan and Pereene*, and the spirited ballad-lyric, which comes a good deal short of being

poetry, and by which alone Richard Glover survives, *Admiral Hosier's Ghost*. All these correspond to the 'compositions by modern authors,' such as John Leyden, which are admitted into the *Border Minstrelsy*. Between Percy and Scott these literary ballads multiplied; some of them were palmed off as old, and they were seldom good for much; but they may have taught the author of the *Ancient Mariner* what to avoid.

The *Minstrelsy* (1802-3) was the next landmark in ballad studies;[1] and meantime the influence of the *Reliques* had struck deep and ranged far. The story of its effect on Bürger and his companions, and of how the ballad came home again when *Lenore* and the *Wild Huntsman* inspired Scott, belongs to the chronicle of the next age, and of German poetry. At home, the *Reliques* were succeeded by many other garlands. A band of collectors can be named, some of them more scrupulous with their texts than Percy, and some less. One of the most careful was David Herd,[2] whose general integrity as a transcriber is to his honour. He gathered both songs and ballads; and many of the songs, long left in MS., have now been edited. Others are to be found in his *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs*, of which the first edition appeared in 1769, and the next, containing, says Herd, 'the addition of nearly an equal number,' in 1776. The title does not indicate the number of ballads that he printed, many of them of the better kind, and many for the first time 'recovered from tradition or old manuscripts.' The collection also contains 'sentimental pastoral love-songs,' and pieces 'comic, jovial, and humorous.' Herd, however, added no critical apparatus, and chose with little discrimination. It has been pointed out that

> his volumes are a mixture of good and bad, genuine old fragments and modern trash, thrown together without distinction, and with no account of authorship or sources.

But Herd's versions can be trusted, and many of his old ballads have their place in the monumental collection, *English and Scottish Ballads*, of Francis James Child. Other labourers in the same field were Thomas Evans and Robert Harding Evans: the *Old Ballads* (1777, 1784) of the father were strictly revised in 1810 by the son, who belonged to the accurate school, and who cut away many of the fungi, the modern imitations, that were printed in the former editions. The forgeries of William Pinkerton, and many of the works of the rigorous and cantankerous Joseph Ritson, also precede the *Minstrelsy*.

V

The story of James Macpherson [1] (1736-1796) has often been well told ; but the ' Ossianic problem ' to-day is the quality of Macpherson's imagination, and not the authenticity of *Fingal* or *Carthon*. In his own time the two questions were perforce confounded. Whoever made the ' poems,' they remained, as poems, exactly what they were. Nor was their appeal to Goethe, to Chateaubriand, to Napoleon, and to the imagination of Europe, much affected by the verdict of the scholars. The charm of these lyrics and epics faded away not because Macpherson was found out but because *they* were found out. By the side of the truer poetry which succeeded them they could not stand. They are hardly read now except by students ; yet the lover of letters loses not a little if he misses ' Ossian.' But first to notice, though in bare outline, the long history of Ossian's vogue.

Macpherson was twenty-three when he began operations. In 1759 he showed the *Death of Oscar* to John Home at Moffat ; and in the next year he published his fifteen *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, collected in the Highlands of Scotland and translated from the Galic or Erse Language*. At the end of 1761, after his Highland tour, he issued the six books of *Fingal, an Ancient Epic*, with other pieces (dated 1762) ; and, in 1763, the eight books of *Temora*, another epic, with more short pieces. In 1773 came Macpherson's definitive edition of the *Poems of Ossian*, with a discourse of his own and another by Hugh Blair. These books were the well-head of an immense literature : of editions and commentaries ; of versifications, and of translations into eight or nine foreign tongues ; of reports, books, and dissertations, *pro* and *con* ; of imitations and echoes, again in many tongues ; and of modern articles and treatises on the whole story, including special studies of ' Ossian in France,' ' Ossian in Germany,' and Ossian everywhere. The most enduring result was to quicken the interest in the real old Celtic poetry, both Irish and Scottish, on the part of collectors and scholars. Many things of course contributed to that great enterprise ; but the task of putting Macpherson's ' Ossian ' in his place counted for something.

The reception of the poems throws light on the state of taste and judgment in the latter half of the century. Macpherson's pretensions were attacked on three principal grounds, which can be kept fairly distinct.

(1) The earliest challenge was that of common sense. He

was pressed by friend and foe to produce the text of the Gaelic verses which he professed to have collected orally. In Johnson's well-known words,

> If the poems were really translated, they were certainly first written down. Let Mr. Macpherson deposit the manuscript in one of the colleges at Aberdeen. . . .

This was never done; and without following Macpherson through his maze of evasions, enough to say that long afterwards, when money was found for him by his admirers to enable him to print his originals, he left at his death a mass of Gaelic manuscripts which were edited, and published after being destroyed. These are pronounced [1] to be written in a language which is not that of the popular poetry of any period. It appears that it is a retranslation of parts of his own English; in other words, a forgery. A report made in 1805 by the Highland Society of Edinburgh found that no old poem had been discovered answering as a whole to any one of Macpherson's 'Ossianic' pieces. It was clear that he had had some Gaelic originals before him, but had used them as he chose, translating sometimes up to a point, but embroidering and paraphrasing and adding and colouring. These conclusions have been driven home by the Celtic scholars, for whom Macpherson's work is little but a historical curiosity; and they have completely established the second and still more radical charge.

(2) There were many real, traditional ballads on Ossian and Finn current both in the Highlands and in Ireland. But *Temora*, *Carthon*, and the rest were wholly different from these in setting, in detail, in spirit, and in atmosphere. There had been no old epics of the kind. The poems were void of humour and of distinct character-drawing. They effaced the definite and brilliant pictures of the ancient life and customs presented by the ballads, and they substituted haze. In one way, however, Macpherson earned his meed. He kept the outline of the legendary Ossian, who had grown in course of time from the figure of a mere warrior into that of an old poet who survived and lamented departed princes, and who had thus lived on in Highland tradition.

> Withered are these arms, quelled are these deeds; the tide has come, it has reached the shore, and has drowned these powers. I offer thanks to the Creator; he has found solace with great joy. Long is my day in the sad life; once I was joyful.

This is not Macpherson; it is a translation [2] from a fourteenth-century Irish manuscript headed *Oisin Macfind cecinit*. By that

time Ossian, having had his life marvellously prolonged, had become a Christian convert, at the instance of St. Patrick. Macpherson does not use this tale, and is careful to leave religion out of his picture. But he makes Ossian the central figure, and fathers all the poems upon him. The image of Ossian was thus stamped upon the general mind. The setting of landscape, and the peculiar vague sentiment, Macpherson imported himself. His other liberties have become notorious. He fused cycles [1] of story that were centuries apart in legendary date. The Irish Cuchullin was supposed to live in the first century, and the Irish Finn, Macpherson's Fingal, in the third; but in the 'Ossianic poems' they are in contact. Finn, moreover, was Irish; but he, and the other 'warriors of Erin in their famous generations,' are appropriated to Caledonia; and the scholars of Erin, in Macpherson's own day, raised their protest. Worst of all, in a manner which a German expert describes as *nicht hübsch*, Macpherson threw scorn upon the actual popular ballads which had given him some of his material. These he changed and tinted out of all true resemblance; and on such disguisings had modelled other poems, for which no authentic originals have been discovered. The conclusions, however, must not be too sweeping. It is not precisely known, or likely to be known, what poems he really had before him; nor, again, how far they may have been modified, or distorted, before reaching his hands. But it is agreed that he imported into them not only much invented story, but a tone, a mood, a landscape, and a literary manner which was not popular or antique at all.

(3) A third charge, elaborated after Macpherson's time, was that of plagiarism. We must admire his daring and his sense of humour in pointing out certain likenesses between the words of Ossian and those of Milton or the Bible. Thus could be seen the affinity of genius in ages far apart. But the likenesses could be otherwise explained. The *Address to the Sun*, in *Carthon*, had at once become famous, and indeed is the best thing in the whole series; it still retains a certain splendour:

> But to Ossian thou lookest in vain, for he beholds thy beams no more; whether thy yellow hair flows on the eastern clouds, or thou tremblest at the gates of the West. But thou art, perhaps, like me, for a season; thy years will have an end. Thou shalt sleep in thy clouds, careless of the voice of the morning. Exult, then, O sun, in the strength of thy youth! . . .

The supposed author, living in the heroic age, had known, it seems, the scriptural diction only too well. There was

another poet of the dim past who seemed to be conversant with Gray's *Bard*. Malcolm Laing, in 1805, produced many 'illustrations' of this kind. They were enough to prove his point, though sometimes they were too remote to prove anything. The truth was that Macpherson, like Gray himself, and like all poets of Gray's tribe, had drawn upon the poets as he chose. The difference was that Gray avowed his procedure, and that *his* footnotes were inserted in order to show it. Yet Macpherson shows some artistry in his borrowings. They do not destroy that unity of tone which is his most singular achievement. Unity, it is true, speedily sinks into monotony; but that is a modern verdict, and was not the feeling of Macpherson's contemporaries. Taken in small doses, the 'Ossianic poems' are still arresting, and no amount that we may trace of literary reminiscence can dull them altogether.

VI

On all these counts, therefore, the main credit or discredit of the 'Ossianic poems' falls to Macpherson. It has been noticed by critics that as time went on he was half-disposed to hint at the truth and to claim the honours. In the preface to the collected edition of 1773 he observes:

> Those who have doubted my veracity have paid a compliment to my genius; and were even the allegation true, my self-denial might have atoned for my fault. Without vanity I say it, I think I could write tolerable poetry; and I assure my antagonists, that I should not translate what I could not imitate.

This was Macpherson's mode of insuring his fame against the day of detection. Like Chatterton, he had begun with what may have been merely a hoax, and he ended with fabrication. His tactics, it must be admitted, could not have been more effective; the very missiles hurled against him served his turn; for what he wanted was to be noticed. To publish any genuine lays that he might discover, just as they stood, would have done little to launch 'Ossian.' Again, to acknowledge, from the start, his own *pastiches* would have awakened but a mild curiosity. As we see, when their fame had begun to spread, he was ready to leave a loophole for the recognition of his own 'genius.' In his genius he had doubtless believed from the first; and he knew that it was this, and not merely the pretence of antiquity, that had touched a new chord of feeling.

There was to be yet a fourth line of attack, which came from

the poets themselves. 'The Phantom,' wrote Wordsworth, 'was begotten by the snug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition'; and his amusing censure of 'Ossian' follows. 'The imagery was spurious'; 'words are substituted for things'; 'the falsehood that pervades the volumes.' Wordsworth contrasts the indefiniteness of the Ossianic landscape with the precise outlines of nature. But this was the quality that appealed to Macpherson's public. He was to pay, indeed, for his effects; but they lasted, and outlasted, his own time. And Wordsworth, in his indignation, overlooked Macpherson's native talent, which it is time to consider. Of this, whatever it be worth, Scotland must have the credit; for, as Gibbon [1] observes, in one of his many allusions, sceptical yet not wholly damnatory, to 'Ossian,' the poems, 'according to every hypothesis, were composed by a native Caledonian.'

Macpherson's *dramatis personae* do not help him; they are shadows of shadows, and they all talk alike. Ossian, the blind narrator, is the son of the Scottish king, Fingal, and the father of the young Oscar who is slain and lamented. Fingal defeats the Romans, the Norsemen, and the Irish. A great fighter, he has all the chivalrous virtues; he is magnanimous to foes and merciful to captives. At last he dies, and is hymned by Ossian. Round him, and round the princes who oppose him, are crowds of knights with melodious names and indistinguishable natures. There are also many princesses, often warriors too, whom it is impossible to remember apart. Choruses of bards are always ready with harp and song. The cast is completed by the 'machines,' the supernatural figures, who are sometimes ghosts of men and sometimes spirits of places, and who converse or battle with human beings. The most distinct personage is Ossian himself, and the best poetry is that which he speaks, not as the author of the poems, but as a character within them.

These compositions are either epics, or short lays; and the epics are in the nature of lays pieced together. The *Fragments* of 1760 are all short; but they introduce Fingal and other figures that reappear in the epics, as well as Ossian. And in the preface, written after 'conversations' with Macpherson by the respectable and credulous professor, Hugh Blair, the plan of *Fingal* is foretold, and hopes are held out of that work being produced. Blair's encouragement counted for much, his 'classical' tastes approved the regular structure of the epics; and his *Dissertation* was for some time the chief reasoned defence of 'Ossian.' When *Fingal* came, several of the *Fragments* were economically wrought into it, with alterations; and also into

the smaller pieces, such as *Carric-Thura*, sixteen of which were now appended. Others were dropped for good and all; and one of these,[1] printed only in a second and rare edition (1760) of the *Fragments*, may be cited, not for any special virtue, but in order to show what it was that struck so newly upon the ear. The most popular poem of late years had been Home's *Douglas*; Dyer's *Fleece* had appeared in 1757. So, too, had Gray's *Pindaric Odes*, only to be half-appreciated. The *Reliques* were still to come. And after Mason's *Caractacus* (1759), some poetical refreshment was welcome:

'Tall art thou,' said Fear-comhraic, 'son of mighty Cormac; fair are thy cheeks of youth, and strong thy arm of war. Prepare the feast, and slay the deer; send round the shell of joy: three days we feast together; we fight on the fourth, son of Cormac.'

'Why should I sheathe my sword, son of the noble Comhfeadan? Yield to me, son of battle, and raise my fame in Erin.'

'Raise thou my tomb, O Muirnin! If Fear-comhraic fall by thy steel, place my bright sword by my side, in the tomb of the lonely hill.'

'We fight by the noise of the stream, Muirnin! wield thy steel.' Swords sound on helmets, sound on shields; brass clashes, clatters, rings. Sparkles buzz; shivers fly; death bounds from mail to mail. Their eyes dart fire; their nostrils blow; they leap, they thrust, they wound.

Fear-comhraic the Scot and Muirnin, 'chief of the wars of Erin,' are rivals for the love of Diorma. Muirnin has come overseas with an armed following, which includes one Aodan 'of the gloomy brow'; and he refuses the offer of Fear-comhraic to feast with him three days before fighting. He is killed in the duel; but Aodan treacherously slays Fear-comhraic with an arrow. Diorma laments over the two tombs. Battle, chivalry, and elegy of this kind were to be the staple of the Ossianic poems. A few examples of the other short lays will suggest their character. *Comala* is the name of a princess of the Orkneys who follows Fingal in disguise on his campaign against 'Caracul' (Caracalla). Hidallan, Fingal's rival, deceives her with false news of his death. Fingal appears, but Comala thinks that he is his own ghost, and she dies broken-hearted. *Croma* is the name of an Irish kingdom which Ossian has relieved from an enemy; and he tells the story in order to soothe the grief of Malvina for her lost lover. *Berrathon* is the name of a Scandinavian isle ruled by a friend of Fingal; there is a lady in it who loves a cruel prince and who dies. In *Carthon*, a father, like Rustum, unknowingly kills a son in battle. Here

are possible stories enough ; but they are vaporised, and their outlines blurred, in the telling. Often we must turn back to the ' argument ' prefixed, to see exactly what has happened. This is equally true of the two ' epics.'

Fingal describes the invasion of Ireland by the Scandinavian Swaran, king of Lochlin, and the succour given by Fingal, the victorious, to the Irish king Cuthullin. *Temora*, with its eight books or ' duans,' is likewise built up on the classical model, with a main action and seven or eight inserted episodes. Here Fingal invades Ullin, or Ulster, in order to punish King Cairbar for slaying the heir Cormac, who is Fingal's kinsman. There are Homeric duels between heroes ; epical similes ; ghosts ; and bardic chants, or elegies. It is difficult to die unsung. Cairbar is slain, and his spirit comes back. There is feasting, boasting, and ' flyting,' according to pattern. Yet nothing remains on the mind except detached passages of lyric prose. To recite the action of *Temora*, or of *Fingal*, would be tedious beyond words. It is not for his stories, nor for his personages, that Macpherson can gain a hearing ; nor was it these that captured the world. What, then, was it ? and what is it in his work, that still retains a certain ghostly beauty ? The answer seems to be, in his peculiar vein of melancholy ; in the music of his names ; in certain qualities of his language ; and in his rhythm.

Ossian has dispossessed Homer in my heart. To wander on the heath amid the whistling of the storm-wind that bears away the spirits of our fathers in the steaming clouds, in the moonlit gloaming ! To hear descending from the hill, through the roaring of the forest stream, the sighs, half blown away, of the spirits from their caverns, and the lament of the maiden who mourns herself to death beside the four stones, moss-covered and overgrown with grass, of her nobly fallen lover ! To find *him* there, the wandering, hoary bard, seeking for the footsteps of his fathers on the wide heath :— and ah ! their gravestones he finds, and then he laments, and looks at the beloved star of eve, now to hide in the rolling ocean ; and the Past lives in the hero's soul, the time when the friendly ray still shone on the perils of the brave, and the moon illumined his vessel returning crowned with victory ! . . .

So, in the year 1774, exclaimed the youthful Werther ; and to his Lotte he read out, with extraordinary emotion, one of the *Songs of Selma*. Goethe, long afterwards, explained how he and his friends had run through the malady of *melancholy*, which flowed from many sources—from circumstance, from reading *Hamlet*, and not least from Ossian : ' departed heroes and faded

maidens hovered round us till at last we thought we beheld the Spirit of Loda in its own dreadful shape.'

VII

But where, then, did the famous, epidemical 'melancholy' come from, if not from any ancient originals? It is fair to say that it came from Macpherson himself. Something like it, of course, was in the air: there was the funeral strain, the preposterous Dead March, of Young and his company; there was the *Penseroso* melancholy, the associate of 'calm Peace and Quiet,' which was felt honestly, and not merely as a literary mood, by the Wartons; and there was the true, the gentler and universalised sentiment of the *Elegy*. Goethe names some of these as contributing to the general mood. But the reception of 'Ossian' showed how different was *his* peculiar wail. His sadness was as penetrating as the Northern mist, and often hardly more articulate than the wind on the bent; and it satisfied, or created, as the verse of clear outline and reasonable temper could not do, a thirst for the formless and indefinite. To this new mood Macpherson's readers might well, in Johnson's phrase, 'abandon their minds.' And all the better, if it seemed to be the voice of shadows; for Ossian, and Ullin, and Fingal, and the bards, and the warriors, and the princesses who died in battle dressed like warriors, were not more substantial than the Spirit of Loda and the other wraiths with whom they conversed. They were a relief after Atticus and Sporus; and so was the landscape, even after the *Seasons*. Macpherson seems to have been inspired, first of all, by his native scenery, softened indeed and generalised, with all the living homely detail left out—but with its solitariness all the more sharply defined, and its figures magnified and dimmed in the *haar*. That very shirking of the concrete and particular, which provoked Wordsworth, caught the taste of the time. The charm, too, of curious and vowelled proper names, *Oina-Morul*, *Colna-Dona*, *Cuthullin*, *Lora*, whether found, or distorted, or simply invented, appealed to Macpherson, as he knew it would to his public. It is hard even now to read without a certain afterglow of sympathy such a passage as the peroration of *Berrathon*—although, indeed, it can never make *us* melancholy:

There is a murmur in the heath! The stormy winds abate! I hear the voice of Fingal. Long has it been absent from mine ear! 'Come, Ossian, come away,' he says. Fingal has received his fame. We passed away, like flames that have shone for a season. Our

departure was in renown. Though the plains of our battles are dark and silent, our fame is in the four gray stones. The voice of Ossian has been heard. The harp has been strung in Selma. 'Come, Ossian, come away,' he says; 'come, fly with thy fathers on clouds.' I come, I come, thou king of men! The life of Ossian fails. . . .

Did thy beauty last, O Ryno? Stood the strength of car-borne Oscar? Fingal himself departed! The halls of his fathers forgot his steps. Shalt thou then remain, thou aged bard! when the mighty have failed? But my fame shall remain, and grow like the oak of Morven; which lifts its broad head to the storm, and rejoices in the course of the wind.

It may be, as Johnson also said, that 'many men, many women, and many children' could write like this; and so indeed they did. There was a series of *Ossianids*, even in Macpherson's lifetime: a Mr. John Clark, a Mr. John Smith of Campbeltown, who played the same tune. But never so well as Macpherson; and it is of interest to quote from one of these *Songs of Selma*, which attracted the author of *Werther*:

Narrow is thy dwelling now! Dark the place of thine abode! With three steps I compass thy grave, O thou who wast so great before! Four stones, with their heads of moss, are the only memorial of thee. A tree with scarce a leaf, long grass which whistles in the wind, mark to the hunter's eye the grave of the mighty Morar. Morar! thou art low indeed. Thou hast no mother to mourn thee; no maid with her tears of love. Dead is she that brought thee forth. Fallen is the daughter of Morglan.

Macpherson showed judgment, from his own point of view, in his choice of language and cadence. The lover of poetry, though he is moved here and there, cannot be trusted to read these volumes through. But the appetite of contemporaries was keener. For all his borrowing, Macpherson kept his made-up style in a single key. He put the Psalms and other Hebrew poetry to strange uses. He affected short parallel sentences, going often in pairs, omitted the connective *ands* and *buts*, and produced a far-off echo of the biblical cadence. In fact, he employs, and intermixes with perverse care, some three different rhythms. The result, harassing to the modern ear, was welcome at the time. It was 'poetical prose' of a new kind—prose, but prose regular enough to suggest both verse and a poetical original. It all sounded semi-scriptural, and primitive, and rudely musical. One of these rhythms is simply exalted prose, dropping at times into a kind of measure:

The murmur of thy streams, O Lora! brings back the memory of the past. The sound of thy woods, O Garmallar, is lovely in mine

ear. Dost thou not behold, Malvina, a rock with its head of heath? Three aged pines bend from its face; green is the narrow plain at its feet; | there the flówer of the moúntain gróws, and shákes its white heád in the breéze. (*Carthon.*)

But this movement seldom continues long, and is always tumbling over, either into iambic verse, after the manner of Charles Dickens—

Around the king they rise in wrath. No words come forth; they seize their spears. Each soul is rolled into itself. | At lénġth the súdden cláng is wáked on áll their échoing shiélds. | Each tákes his híll by níght; at íntervals they dárkly stánd. | Unéqual búrsts the húm of sóngs, betweén the roáring wínd! (*Cath-Loda.*)

—or else, and much more often, into a three-beat movement which is Macpherson's special trade-mark, and which (like the seven-foot iambics marked above) he almost certainly bequeathed to the *Prophetic Books* of Blake; and such clauses fall into parallel pairs:

On the rúshy bánk of a stréam slept the daúghter of Inis-húna. | The hélmet had fállen from her heád. Her dreáms were in the lánd of her fáthers. | The mórning is ón the fiéld. Gray streáms leap dówn from the rócks. | The breézes, in shádowy wáves, fly óver the rúshy fiélds.

Macpherson's preface to his collected edition shows that these effects were planned:

The novelty of cadence, in what is called a prose version, though not destitute of harmony, will not to common readers supply the absence of the frequent returns of rhyme. This was the opinion of the writer himself, though he yielded to the judgment of others, in [*sic*] a mode which presented freedom and dignity of expression, instead of fetters which cramp the thought; whilst the harmony of language is preserved. His intention was to publish in verse.

He had already made heroic couplets of his own, in the *Highlander*; and he felt that the form was being staled. His choice of 'free verse,' or no less free prose, is in keeping with his avoidance of firm outline in the imagery and characters. Either prose or verse, but not a hybrid, is the medium for translated verse. If we wish (though it is needless now) to set beside 'Ossian' something that will at once 'kill' it, the choice is easy. The superb *Dead at Clonmacnois*, done by T. W. Rolleston from the Irish of Enoch O'Gillan ('In a quiet, watered land, a land of roses'), shows us at once the true 'Celtic melancholy,' heroic and plangent, and the way to reproduce it in

English. But perhaps Macpherson's own phrase, though not meant modestly, is too modest: 'I think I could write tolerable poetry'; and on the whole he deserves our thanks rather than our contempt.

VIII

Macpherson went to Florida and returned, wrote histories, was pensioned by Lord North, sat in the Commons, made money, retired as the laird of Badenoch, and was laid in the Abbey near Johnson. The vagaries of his fame [1] while he lived are a comedy. We read how the greater men of letters took sides, were often delighted at first, then wavered, and how at last most of them were arrayed against 'Ossian.' Johnson, we know, was adverse throughout; his discussions in the Highlands, his passage with Macpherson, his big stick, and his verbal thrashing of the poet are familiar. It was at Ulinish, on September 23, 1773, that he let fall the often-quoted sentence, so notably confirmed by modern research:

> He has found names, and stories, and phrases, nay passages in old songs, and with them has blended his own compositions, and so made what he gives to the world as a translation of an ancient poem.

Later, in his *Journey*, he wrote, quite consistently, of the poems, 'I believe they never existed in any other form than that which we have seen'; adding, however, that

> he has doubtless inserted names that circulate in popular stories, and may have translated some wandering ballads, if any can be found.

And to Boswell, in a letter of 1775, he acutely remarked that

> if he [Macpherson] had not talked unskilfully of *manuscripts*, he might have fought with oral tradition much longer.

But Johnson was by no means the first sceptic of note. Hume, who was delighted with the poems, and backed Macpherson, was soon suspicious, urged Blair to see that the 'originals' were found, became a resolute sceptic when they were not found, and warned Gibbon to persist in his hinted doubts. Gibbon half accepted the advice, but never pronounced formally against Macpherson. Horace Walpole liked the *Fragments*; *Fingal* he thought 'fine,' but boring; as we know, he had no taste for epic; and something whispered to him that the poems were 'not genuine.' On the other side, the most prominent adherents were but lesser lights, namely Blair and Home,

Macpherson's first admirers; and they never gave in; but what were they, against such heavy metal? Defenders, indeed, abounded; and nearly fifty writers have been counted who in the course of a hundred years were loyal to 'Ossian.'

But few of these warriors, on either side (unless we reckon Home), were poets; and the two questions, whether the lays and epics were ancient, and whether they were good, were seldom fairly distinguished. They were thought to be nothing if they were *not* ancient. But Gray saw this distinction, and the resulting dilemma, clearly enough. In 1760, after having sent inquiries to Scotland and received unsatisfying answers, he writes to Wharton:

> In short, the whole external evidence would make one believe these fragments counterfeit; but the internal is so strong on the other side, that I am resolved to believe them genuine, spite of the devil and the kirk: it is impossible to conceive that they were written by the same man that writes me these letters; on the other hand, it is almost as hard to suppose (if they are original) that he should be able to translate them so admirably. In short, this man is the very daemon of poetry, or he has lighted on a treasure hid for ages.

That is, Gray admired the poems, 'struck with their beauty'; admired them more, indeed, than we can to-day; still, he saw their quality, as we can see it if only we will. They seemed to him to be new-old things, that had come early, like the songs of Lapps and Red Indians, in the progress of poesy. What he wrongly doubted was Macpherson's talent; and in this lay the solution of the dilemma; but only the progress of scholarship could provide it. The whole debate shows how tender a plant was criticism in the third quarter of the century, when so few of the stronger minds were alive to the quality of the new poetry.

IX

Thomas Chatterton [1] has reminded some critics of Keats, in his power of easily changing his voice, of becoming many persons in turn, and of moving from one style to another while saying little about himself. His double life as a writer began early and persisted almost to the end of his short span (1752-1770). We find it in his childhood, during his apprenticeship to the attorney Lambert, and up to his departure from Bristol to London. He poured out with facility verse in the common forms of the time, and also the poetry by which he lives. It is the difference between talent and genius, marked, on the surface, by that

between ordinary and fabricated English. His practice in imitative odes and heroics must have taught him how *not* to write the *Rowley Poems*. At the same time each of these styles bears some traces of the other. Echoes of Pope and Dryden, of Gray and Collins, intrude into Rowley's compositions, and do not do them much harm unless we still wish to believe in Rowley. Stripped of the fancy dress and the amusing spelling, there are passages that would hardly surprise us from some unknown imitator of Spenser in Dodsley's *Collection* :

> Whenn Battayle, smethynge [*smoking*] wythe new quickenn'd gore,
> Bendynge wythe spoiles and bloddie droppynge hedde,
> Dydd the merke wood of ethe [*ease*] and rest explore,
> Seekeynge to lie onn Pleasures downie bedde,
>
> Pleasure, dauncyng fromm her wode,
> Wreathedd wythe floures of aiglintine,
> Fromm hys vysage washedd the bloud,
> Hylte [*hid*] hys swerde and gaberdyne.

Sir Herbert Croft, in that incoherent work *Love and Madness* (1780), which contains some information of value about Chatterton, gives the view of a contemporary on this point :

> You shall tell me whether you don't think it easier for Chatterton to have imitated the style of Rowley's age (which he has not done exactly) . . . than for Rowley to write in a style which did not exist till so many ages after his time.

Also, in the avowed poems there are lines that might occur (with the spelling duly covered up) in the *Battle of Hastings* or the *Storie of William Canynge* :

> Once, ere the gold-haired sun shot the new ray
> Through the grey twilight of the dubious morn ;

or, in describing Winter,

> His train a motley, sanguine, sable cloud,
> He limps along the russet, dreary moor.

But these are exceptions ; and if there were no other evidence, we should scarcely suppose the two groups of poems to be from the same hand. It cannot be known how long Chatterton would have kept up this ambidextrous way of working. When he reached London he tried to live by prose and verse of the marketable kind, and produced it freely. For all we can tell, he had by that time done with Rowley. The *Balade of Charitie*, which was offered to a magazine on July 4, he may have brought from home. On August 24, being then in want, and refusing in his pride to accept food that he had not earned, he

poisoned himself. Had he consented to live, he seems to have been in a fair way to get his bread in Fleet Street; with what results for poetry, is not to be guessed. The tragedy speaks for itself; Chatterton was seventeen years and nine months old; but he was aware, probably, that he had written for posterity; or, as he said in his angry lines to Horace Walpole,[1] that he would 'stand by Rowley's side.'

Chatterton's acknowledged prose includes imitations of Ossian, Addisonian essays, and Junian invectives; and much of his signed verse is in the ferocious vein. *Kew Gardens* and the eight hundred lines of *Resignation* are modelled on Churchill and full of obscure personal allusion. If Chatterton had lived he might well, like Canning, have given a new lease to the measure of Pope and Dryden. He had little to learn upon the technical side, and the octosyllabic couplet and the quatrain came no less easily to him. He tossed off eclogues and 'African fables,' odes and hymns and squibs, with his native gift of mimicry. The clink-clink of the songs in the *Revenue, a Burletta*, shows the long-persisting influence of the *Beggar's Opera*. Other verses illustrate the quality that struck Wordsworth and Dante Rossetti, who speaks of Chatterton as 'akin to Milton through his Satan's pride.' His *Will* is a medley of verse and prose written, whether sincerely or in bravado, a few months before his end:

> For had I never known the antique lore,
> I ne'er had ventured from my peaceful shore,
> To be the wreck of promises and hopes,
> A Boy of Learning, and a Bard of Tropes;
> But happy in my peaceful sphere had moved,
> Untroubled, unrespected, unbeloved.

Six inscriptions in prose follow, one of them in old French and one in misspelt Latin, in memory of his forbears and of himself; and then, a wild and whirling rhymed testament of his several virtues to those of his acquaintance who are most in need of them. This was almost the final flare-up of Chatterton's talent; his actual last words were addressed to his mother, and conclude:

> Have mercy, Heaven! when here I cease to live,
> And this last act of wretchedness forgive.

X

Many, though by no means all, of the *Rowley Poems* were published by Thomas Tyrwhitt in 1777 from Chatterton's manuscripts or from the best available copies. The editor, who

was the best living judge of such a question, gave no definite finding as to the authorship; but in another edition of the following year flatly denied, on linguistic grounds, that the work could be Rowley's, and asserted that it was wholly Chatterton's. In 1782, having now further evidence, Tyrwhitt in a tract defended this conviction against various advocates of Rowley. Thomas Warton in his *History of English Poetry* devotes a whole chapter to these poems. He admits them, under protest, into his fifteenth-century chronicle, but is driven as he proceeds to the conclusion, for which he argues at length, that they are forgeries. Vexed that he had ever been compelled to hesitate, Warton calls Chatterton

> an adventurer, a professed hireling in the trade of literature, full of projects and inventions, artful, enterprising, unprincipled, indigent, and compelled to subsist by expedients.

But in spite of this stony verdict on the boy, he perforce praises the poems, as 'throughout poetical and animated,' and as 'sustaining one uniform tone of harmony'; and quotes at length some of the finest of the lyrics. In 1782 he produced a separate *Inquiry*, in which Chatterton is denounced; this whole attitude shows the perplexed state of the controversy, which produced a prolonged dropping fire of pamphlets. The matter was really settled; but the philological and literary proof of Chatterton's authorship was clinched in 1871 by Walter William Skeat in his *Essay on the Rowley Poems*. The Rowley language was now fully analysed and its sources exposed. We know the glossaries that Chatterton used, and most of the poets whom he read, and exactly how he perverted, mistook, or invented words and inflexions; and how the result is a no-language, of no period, disguised in an arbitrary spelling. Thus the independence of Chatterton's genius was finally proved for scholars. Meantime the poets and the public had also found out its quality. But Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Rossetti speak less of his poetry than of his personality and fate. They could hardly see as clearly as posterity that he was not merely a 'marvellous boy,' but one of their own lineage. Even now it is not so easy to forget the dispute and to approach the *Rowley Poems* simply as poetry. Probably the right method is first to hear them read aloud, so that the spelling does not trouble the eye. To begin by perusing them first in some modernised or half-translated shape is to mar the impression and to lose much of the music. Also a key to the hard words must be at hand. But the work should next also be seen as Chatterton proffered

it. The spelling, the language, and all the other disguises and pretences were required for his purpose. They are not merely the work of the schoolboy, imp, and dreamer, but also of the *other* Chatterton, the juvenile cynic and satirist who knew his public. No one would have noticed him just because he was a poet. His work was admired not because it was good but because it was thought to be old. To be read, he must deceive ; and if the world was a fool, so much the better. If he had been found out at once, and discouraged, we might have lost some of his best things ; and we can only be thankful that he forged.

The Rowley romance, however, began as a piece of childish make-believe, formed itself into a poetic dream, and became, by easy degrees, an elaborated hoax. The stages are not to be sharply distinguished or precisely dated, and all three were present to the end. The charm of black-letter, and of illuminated capitals, is said to have stirred Chatterton before he was seven ; and the vellums, saved from the muniment room of St. Mary Redcliffe, are thought to have set him on the track of his inventions. *Elinoure and Juga*, according to one story, was written at the age of twelve. In any case, his whole mind came to be subdued, without scruple, to his creative fancy. The tombs and brasses, the science of blazonry, the historic figure of William Canynge the Mayor, the eighteenth-century glossaries of the younger John Kersey and of Nathan Bailey, the poetry of the Elizabethans and Chaucer—out of all this Chatterton came to build a fictitious world, peopled by poets and patrons of poets ; and he began to pass off upon the local antiquaries, and on citizens concerned for the glory of Bristol, the series of poems by an imaginary Thomas Rowley, a monk and the confessor of Canynge. To Rowley he sought to give, in Masson's words, 'a probable and fixed footing in history.' He produced, carefully smeared and doctored, a few of the alleged originals. He also concocted much prose to illustrate the same saga. The opening of the New Bridge in 1768 was a chance not to be lost ; and an account appeared of the friars, in Canynge's time, as they passed over the Old Bridge, and of Canynge himself,

> mounted on a white horse, dight with sable trappings, wroughte about by the Nunnes of Saincte Kenna, with Goud and Silver ; his Hayr brayded with Ribbons, and a Chaperon, with the auntient Arms of Bristowe fastende on his Forehead.

The *Ryse of Peyncteynge in Englande*, which went to Horace Walpole, is a less lively sally. But Chatterton showed his tact, and may have specially enjoyed himself, when he inserted the

dull passages in his prose and verse, all for the sake of verisimilitude. Many manuscripts of the prose pieces rest in the British Museum, and a number were printed by Southey and Cottle in 1803. As a whole, they do not compare in interest with the verse.

XI

We have to imagine a very young, uniquely susceptible reader, steeped above all in the *Faerie Queene*, but also in Drayton, in the songs of the dramatists, and to a less degree in Chaucer and Lydgate ; well seen in the popular ballads, both of the golden and the copper species ; and also knowing the writers of his own century ; using, and often mixing up, all these patterns in turn ; casting about amongst many metres, and playing with and varying them insatiably ; and, all the while, developing an original sense of colour of melody, and working with a delighted sense of power and amusement. The Rowley fable is laid in the fifteenth century, with many of its properties and decorations ; but the models for prevailing style come from the end of the sixteenth ; while the language, however unhistorical and composite, has in the end a queer unity of its own. The study of Chatterton's metres in the *Rowley Poems* cannot be merely technical. It is one of the best clues to his genius, especially if they are compared with those in his avowed works. Indeed, much of the so-called ' romantic movement ' consists simply in a clearer perception of the measures that befit a particular mood or purpose. Certain kinds of stanza come to declare themselves as the medium for more passionate, or remote, or richly coloured matter, others for matter more prosaic or aggressive. Often the same poet, Thomas Warton or Chatterton, uses both prosodic species for their natural purposes. The *Rowley Poems* show a liking either for the ballad-measure, or for a lyrical one in short lines but variously arranged ; or else, in matter of more weight, for the ten-syllable line in stanza-form. Chatterton's great achievement, certainly, is to give that *line* a new rhythm and motion, getting clean away alike from the balanced verse of Pope and from the involved and stiffened form of the Miltonising poets. This lesson he learned from the Elizabethans ; but the effect is his own. Further, in seeking a stanza composed of such lines, Chatterton goes over part of the same ground as Spenser, who, as we know, experimented with many arrangements, using the quatrain (*abab*) as a base. But Chatterton avoids using Spenser's final discovery, the nine-line stave, perhaps because it had been recently staled ; and, after

many trials and variations not to be recounted here, he comes to favour a verse of ten, with the rhymes preferably ordered thus (*ababbcbcdD*) :

As when the shepster in the shadie bowre
In jintle slumbers chase the heat of daie,
Hears doublyng echoe wind the wolfins rore,
That neare hys flocke is watchynge for a praie,
He tremblynge for his sheep drives dreeme awaie,
Gripes faste hys burled [*armèd*] croke, and sore adradde
Wyth fleeting strides he hastens to the fraie,
And rage and prowess fyres the coistrell [*young*] lad ;
With trusty talbots [*hounds*] to the battel flies,
And yell of men and dogs and wolfins tear the skies.

Also he manages to give great beauty to the Troilus-verse with the last line lengthened (*ababbcC*) as in *Elinoure and Juga* ; and a variant of this (*ababcdD*) is the measure of his most perfect poem written in long lines, the *Balade of Charitie* :

An almes, sir prieste ! the droppynge pilgrim saide,
O ! let me waite within your covente dore,
Till the sunne sheneth hie above our heade,
And the loude tempeste of the aire is oer ;
Helpless and ould am I alas ! and poor ;
No house, ne friend, ne moneie in my pouche ;
All yatte I call my owne is this my silver crouche [*crucifix*].

The *Excelente Balade of Charitie* also shows an absorption in natural things, deeper than is found in any eighteenth-century poet, including Blake ; for Blake always sees behind what is apprehended by the bodily eye, while Chatterton identifies himself with his own perceptions, and forgets himself in them. Some of his pictures, though the memories of Spenser are evident, are nearer to Keats than to Spenser : the blackberries ' dance in air.'

Whanne Autumpne blake and sonne-brente doe appere,
With hys goulde honde guylteynge the falleynge lefe,
Bryngeynge oppe Wynterr to folfylle the yere,
Beerynge uponne hys backe the riped shefe ;
Whan al the hyls wythe woddie sede ys whyte ;
Whanne levynne-fyres and lemes do mete from far the syghte ;

Whann the fayre apple, rudde as even skie,
Do bende the tree unto the fructyle grounde ;
When joicie peres, and berries of blacke die,
Do daunce in ayre, and call the eyne arounde ;
Thann, bee the even foule, or even fayre,
Meethynckes mie hartys joie is steynced [*stinted*] wyth somme care.

In the two long poems on the *Battle of Hastings* there is a good deal of the ' neutral ' style, with the language a pitch above

prose. The steady plodding narrative seems to be learnt from Drayton or Daniel. The ten-line verse, with variations, is used again ; and yet again in *Englysh Metamorphosis*, but here with greater speed and vivacity. The tale of Sabrina, visibly suggested by Spenser's version, is told once more ; and the attribution to Rowley, in the century before Spenser, shows Chatterton's contempt for the ignorance of his readers. In his longest piece, *Ælla, a Tragycal Enterlude*, the dialogue and soliloquies are again in this metre ; and the 'Anglo-Saxons,' Ælla, his queen Birtha, and the villain Celmond, talk much in the manner of the *Barons' Wars* :

> Spente with the fyghte, the Danyshe champyons stonde,
> Lyche bulles, whose strengthe and wondrous myghte is fledde ;
> Aella, a javelynne grypped yn eyther honde,
> Flyes to the thronge, and doomes two Dacyannes deadde,
> After hys acte, the armie all yspedde. . . .

But there are breaks of melody and colour too :

> The mornynge 'gyns alonge the Easte to sheene ;
> Darklinge the lighte doe onne the waters plaie ;
> The feynte rodde leme [*red flash*] slow creepeth oere the greene,
> To chase the merkynesse of nyghte awaie. . . .

Some of the songs, which are the glory of *Ælla*, are also Elizabethan in their source. 'O synge unto mie roundelaie' and 'Tourne thee to thie Shepsterr swayne' are not mocking-bird imitations but true revivals, and nothing like them is to be heard in the interval between Collins and Blake, though they drop, like Elinor's song, into the commoner ballad strain. The story of *Ælla* is nothing, nor is drama to be expected.

XII

Some things in the *Rowley Poems* are more mediaeval in character than is always admitted. The *Freere of Orderys Whyte* is at least excellent *pastiche*, and the *musa proterva* of old roguish anti-clerical ditties is heard in it once more :

> There was a Broder of Orderys Whyte,
> Hee sonnge hys Masses yn the Nyghte ;
> Ave Maria, Jesu Maria.
> The Nonnes, al slepynge in the Dortoure,
> Thoughte hym of al syngynge Freeres the Flowre.
> Ave Maria, Jesu Maria.

Another short thing, *Onn Oure Ladyes Chyrche* (let the philologist say his worst of the language and prosody) shows that Chatterton

had caught the very note of Chaucer, the Chaucer of the *House of Fame*:

> As onn a hylle one eve sittynge,
> At oure Ladies Chyrche mouche wonderynge,
> The counynge handieworke so fyne,
> Han well nighe dazeled mine eyne;
> Quod I: some counynge fairie hande
> Yreer'd this chapelle in this lande;
> Full well I wote so fyne a syghte
> Was ne yreer'd of mortall wighte.

This, like another piece on the 'dedication' of the church, is one of the series that clusters round the figure of Canynge. In this last poem, 'Soon as bright sun along the skies,' the matin bell is heard, and the sound of the holy men singing mass rings to heaven. In another the patron is himself the poet, and in the *Storie of William Canynge* tells us of his youthful dream, and how he lay on Avonside and resolved to build an edifice in the service of Truth, at last to lie beneath it himself 'moltrynge ynto claie.' The church is St. Mary Redcliffe. All this part of Chatterton's own dream has a noteworthy clear gracefulness and coherence, and can be judged as a whole.

In his ballad measures he follows closely the popular form and diction, as in a tracing. *Bristowe Tragedie, or the Dethe of Sir Charles Bawdin*, was acknowledged by Chatterton, who told his mother that he 'found the argument, but versified it'; and the basis is probably historical. The poem has all the air of a good ballad which has been worn by many hands but has retained gleams of a finer version now lost. Chatterton had a sure instinct for this kind of effect, and carefully changes from one level of style to another. He catches the flat whine of the street reciter:

> Thenne Florence rav'd as anie madde,
> And dydd her tresses tere;
> 'Oh! staie, my husbande! lorde! and lyfe!'—
> Syr Charles thenne dropt a teare.

But next, when Sir Charles is led to the scaffold, we hear already some of the *minstrelsy* of the *Ancient Mariner*. When Chatterton comes to colour, and pageant, and the delight of the eye, we are sure of him, just as we are of James Elroy Flecker; and they are part of his bequest to the poets, who took more courage after him to say what they saw when they shut their eyes and when visions defiled before them on the darkness:

> Before hym went the council-menne,
> Ynn scarlett robes and golde,

And tassils spanglynge ynne the sunne,
Much glorious to beholde:

The Freers of Seincte Augustyne next
Appeared to the syghte,
Alle cladd ynne homelie russett weedes,
Of godlie monkysh plyghte:

Ynne diffraunt partes a godlie psaume
Moste sweetlie theye dydd chaunt;
Behynde their backes syx mynstrelles came,
Who tun'd the strunge bataunt.

There is evidence that Chatterton would on occasion write a poem first in Rowley's dialect and then turn it into ordinary language. For the benefit of Mr. Burgum the pewterer he produced:

Down in a dark and solitary vale,
Where the curst screech-owl sings her fatal tale . . .
Through the thick brake th' astonished champion sees
A weeping damsel bending on her knees. . . .

The original of this was the *Romaunte of the Cnyghte*, which is roughened over with sham antiquity and looks like an effort to copy the no-metre of Lydgate:

Al downe in a Delle, a merke dernie [*gloomy*] Delle,
Wheere Coppys eke Thighe Trees there bee,
There dyd hee perchaunce Isee
A Damoselle askedde for ayde on her kne,
An Cnyghte uncourteous dydde bie her stonde,
He hollyd herr faeste bie her honde.

This well shows Chatterton's bilingual habit, and also the element, never to be forgotten, of prankishness and gaiety in the whole Rowley enterprise.

XIII

There is more colour, and also more of Spenser, in the forgotten Thompson and the forgotten Croxall than in James Beattie (1735-1803), whose *Minstrel* has retained a kind of *penumbral* position as a lesser classic. This it owes largely to its date and occasion. It appeared in two parts, in 1771 and 1774; and it was inspired, not only by the now long-standing Spenserian tradition, but by the more recent labours of Percy. The dissertation in the *Reliques* on the old minstrels had determined Beattie, in 1766,

to give an account of the birth, education, and adventures of one of those bards; in which I shall have full scope for description, senti-

ment, satire, and even a certain species of humour and pathos, which, in the opinion of my great master, are by no means inconsistent, as is evident from his works.

But the chief attraction of the 'great master,' Spenser, was his measure; and of its virtues Beattie gives a pertinent account, which is, indeed, better than his practice. In his preface he says that

it admits both simplicity and magnificence of sound and language, beyond any other stanza that I am acquainted with. It allows the sententiousness of the couplet, as well as the more complex modulation of blank verse.

And, in a letter of earlier date:

I think it the most harmonious that ever was contrived. It admits of more variety of pauses than either the couplet or the alternate rhyme; and it concludes with a pomp and majesty of sound, which, to my ear, is wonderfully delightful. It seems also very well adapted to the genius of our language, which, from its irregularity of inflexion and number of monosyllables, abounds in diversified terminations, and consequently renders our poetry susceptible of an endless variety of legitimate rhymes.

This, so far as it goes, is sound anatomy; but it means that Beattie, like James Thomson before him, sought to unite, or could not help uniting, at least two rhythms of different orders; and with them, as many styles that were equally incongruous. Also, that unlike Thomson he hardly ever achieved a line, or at least a verse, that could be mistaken, whatever its merits, for one of Spenser's. The ring of the couplet, and even of the blank verse that was then in fashion, often intrudes; and the single lines, though musical and often soft to the point of weakness, are nearer to Goldsmith than to Spenser:

> Responsive to the sprightly pipe, when all
> In sprightly dance the village youth were joined,
> Edwin, of melody aye held in thrall,
> From the rude gambol far remote reclined,
> Soothed with the soft notes warbling in the wind.

And in his best passages, when Beattie for a moment strays into true, concrete description (only dropping at the close into 'Deep mourns the turtle'), the likeness is also to be felt. Or rather, he finds a style of his own, a *linear*, enumerative style, which though in Spenser's measure has not Spenser's cadence:

> The cottage curs at early pilgrim bark;
> Crowned with her pail the tripping milkmaid sings;
> The whistling ploughman stalks afield; and, hark!
> Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings;

Thro' rustling corn the hare astonished springs ;
Slow tolls the village clock the drowsy hour ;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings ;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequestered bower,
And shrill lark carols clear from her aerial tour.

There is not enough of this pure, pleasing, and definite writing in the *Minstrel*. The scenery is generalised ; and a touch like the 'lake, dim-gleaming on the smoky lawn' is rare. Beattie is always smooth ; but he soon becomes abstract and rhetorical, and is too full of those liberal sentiments which require much genius if they are to be made into poetry. The plan, too, of the *Minstrel* lends itself to such divagations.

The minstrel himself, Edwin, is not at all like one of Percy's bards. Beattie states that he is to be the son of a shepherd in Southern Scotland, and one 'of those minstrels who travelled into England, and supported themselves there by singing their ballads to the harp.' In the poem he does not, apparently, go to England ; and the first book, which is by far the better of the two, describes, in its gentle way, 'the growth of a poet's soul.' This, perhaps, is its true claim to originality ; the thing had not been done in English before ; and the next formal attempt of the same kind was to be the *Prelude*, a work which somewhat blocks the way at the expense of Beattie. Edwin is haunted by the cloud and the rainbow, the lake and the mountain, although he moralises on them flatly enough. He sees the fairies, a 'host of little warriors,' not unlike those in Drayton's *Nymphidia*, 'grasping the diamond lance, and targe of gold' ; he chants these and other legends to ancient cottagers ; and, in return, 'a gentler strain the Beldam would rehearse,' namely that of the *Children in the Wood*. He scans all manner of Gothic tales and fables with 'curious and romantic eye.' All this is, at least, matter for poetry ; and poetry, in fact, keeps peering through. Unluckily, in the second book, Edwin, who now has a 'downy cheek and deepened voice,' wanders to a vale, and hears an unseen speaker, who delivers himself, as critics have remarked, strangely in the manner of Childe Harold ; and it is known that Byron studied Beattie's poem. The measure of Spenser assumes an oratorical movement, of the kind that was to become so familiar to all Europe :

'Like them, abandoned to Ambition's sway,
I sought for glory in the paths of guile ;
And fawned and smiled, to plunder and betray,
Myself betrayed and plundered all the while ;
So gnawed the viper the corroding file. . . .'

The speaker is a hermit, whom Edwin presently discovers, seated on a mossy stone with his harp ; and the scene might be that of some little old bogus-romantic steel-engraving. A stag springs up at the hermit's call, and licks

> the withered hand that tied
> A wreath of woodbine round his antlers tall,
> And hung his lofty neck with many a floweret small.

The hermit declaims for the rest of the time, and poetry goes out at the window. But the *Minstrel*, it has to be said, brightens up the interval between the *Deserted Village* and *Table Talk*. This, as we know, was the golden age of the later prose : of Burke's great speeches, of the first volumes of the *Decline and Fall*, and of the *Lives of the Poets* ; but in verse there is little of the rarer kind for our refreshment. Chatterton's poems, indeed, came out during these years, but he had died in 1770 ; and Beattie's slender work kept something like romance alive. His other verses hardly count, though there are flashes in the earlier *Retirement* (1758), and there is a certain faint melody in the *Hermit*. Beattie won much applause for his elaborate *Essay on Truth* (1770), in which he set out to demolish Hume and other unbelievers, but which is now only remembered by name. He had an interview with King George, who highly approved of the work, and 'asked many questions' about it. He was painted by Sir Joshua, says Dyce,

> in his Oxford gown of Doctor of Civil Law, with his famous Essay under his arm ; while beside him is Truth, habited as an Angel, holding in one hand a pair of scales, and with the other thrusting down three frightful figures, emblematic of Prejudice, Scepticism, and Folly.

The painter states that one of this group (presumably Scepticism) was intended for Voltaire.

XIV

If we look back over this great body of verse, or through any good anthology, we are naturally struck by the slow, sure invasion of a new style and temper, more intense, more exalted, and taking fresh account of the face of nature, of the nature of man, and of whatever may lie behind them both. It is a change in the 'shaping spirit of imagination,' and is in no way confined to poetry. If it does us any good, we can call this the 'romantic movement.' There is no need to question the traditional

valuation of this great event. We all know what poetry gained by it. It is more needful to-day to realise what she lost. She lost a certain sober, delicate ideal of form, and a peculiar just correspondence between form, tone, and thinking, which has never been recovered and is only now again being properly valued. The ideal is always there, if only we will go back to it. To do so is to refine our sense of measure when we are being carried away by greater and more splendid things which do not possess that virtue. There is no harm in turning to the *Vanity of Human Wishes* after finishing the *Revolt of Islam*. This effect can hardly be expressed without reference to the sister arts, to the best street architecture of the time, or to the regulated garden with its clear lines and ordered spaces. The lesser poems, like Shenstone's or the *Song to Winifreda*, might be compared to the old arbours, or the old chairs and settles, where the same virtues are seen on a diminished scale. The art, or craft, that presides over the lighter verse, over Chesterfield's *Advice to a Lady in Autumn*, or *Retaliation*, seems the most completely lost of all. There is a common spirit in the workmanship, which may be described either as an instinctive refusal to ask too much of the material, or as a resolve to use the material up to its very limits. Wood, hard or delicate, must have its own shapes and lustre, not those of jewels. Such figures may carry us too far; they indicate no more than the exact fitting of words and measures to a poetical emotion, which may be short of the highest but is none the less authentic:

> No, not for those of women born,
> Not so unlike the die is cast;
> For, after all our vaunt and scorn,
> How very small the odds at last

These qualities, in eighteenth-century poetry, are by no means confined to its most characteristic work—the work, that is, of which the subject or mood is equally appropriate to the finer prose. They are found also in some things that are rich in colour, like Cunningham's *Day*, which owe nothing at all to Milton or Spenser. The century, we may say, tried to *teach* its lesson, not only to its own rebels and outlaws, but to the poets of the next age. And do not those poets go right, or go wrong, very much in proportion as they learn or forget the lesson of Horatian order, outline, and the *proprium* in diction? Wordsworth said many true things about the deficiencies of his predecessors; but are not the excellences of form in *Tintern Abbey*, or the *Ode to Duty*, the specific excellences of the best

eighteenth-century poetry ? Blake, on the other hand, when he goes to pieces in his *Prophetic Books*, does so partly because he ignores what his own age could have told him. The antidotes to false and shapeless writing were to come, of course, from many sources, from Greece and Italy. But Greece and Italy were far off ; and the immediate school for the nineteenth-century poets was at home. In the revulsion against what seemed to be a poorer, a more prosaic, kind of experience, the discipline of the last age was often forgotten. Now it begins to be recalled ; and yet it does not seem to tell much upon our living poets. Imitation is not wanted, it can only end in *pastiche* ; but the ideal of measure and precise adjustment remains. It is always a problem to find the right form for the middle kind of lyric, the homely subdued story, and the verse of manners. For these the eighteenth century has so far furnished the best patterns, the best language, and the best rhythms.

CHAPTER XVI

CRITICS

I

ENGLAND during this period remained true to the mental habit in which she has, upon the whole, differed strikingly from France. The changes in poetry, coming in through 'creeks and inlets,' were not the result of concerted action, or announced by any manifesto. There was nothing like the programme of the Pleïade, or the chastening procedure of Malherbe or Boileau, or the demonstration of Victor Hugo in 1827. The body of principles, or formulae, that had accompanied the rise of the so-called 'classical school' itself, was in part imported from France. In part, also, they simply expressed a negation—the absence, or neglect, of any imaginative work the mere presence of which could have refuted them. The critical judgment on the school in question was really pronounced, not before or during its time of prosperity, but on the eve of its decline, in the *Lives of the Poets*, by one of its own masters. Johnson, in his old age, was little tied by authority or abstract canons. He struggles, not against the 'rules,' but against his own limitations; and these he is always, however much to his discomfort, overriding. He sees little in *Lycidas*, but admires *Il Penseroso*; he dislikes Gray's odes, but surrenders to the *Elegy*. He shows much independence in judging the poets of his own ancestry, and particularly Dryden. Still, the poetry that was not of this lineage at all is always on its defence with Johnson. We do not expect him to have prophetic vision, or to see all the virtue of marvels that were before his eyes, such as the *Song to David* or the *Rowley Poems* ('it is wonderful how the whelp has written such things'). The *Lives* stand four-square; they gain by their very restriction of view, and also by their concessions; they represent a single, strong, honest mind; and there is nothing equally imposing, from the opposite camp, to set against them. Indeed, as I have said, it was not a camp; only a few Arabs, of different tribes, raiding here and there dispersedly. Thomson, in his youth, claiming the rights of the

poetry of landscape; Gray, ranging over literature, tasting, valuing, understanding better than any man of his time, but only making notes, and writing letters, and never publishing his ideas; Joseph Warton, carefully putting Pope in his niche, in the name of the higher poetry that was beyond Pope's range; Shenstone too, in his 'detached thoughts,' letting fall many luminous observations: all these illustrate the guerilla nature of the warfare. Even after 1780, there was no distinct public challenge for many years; the explosive sayings of Blake, which truly mark a new age, were unread and unknown; and it was not until Wordsworth, in his preface of 1798 (or rather, in that of 1800), spoke out, that criticism began, in any sense, to overtake poetic production. Meantime, during the period here reviewed, it is sporadic; and some writers must be described, who fall into scattered groups. The first is that of the more formal, or academic critics, who flourished in the North.

II

We are not to expect much artistic foresight, or perception of the changes that were coming over poetry, in the three Scottish arbiters, Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782), Hugh Blair (1718-1800), and George Campbell (1719-1796); but it would be wrong to regard their works as a mere desert. They were all popular authors, and they were, perhaps, the first to teach literature in a methodical way to the youth of their country. Blair was professor of rhetoric at Edinburgh; Campbell was professor of divinity at Aberdeen, and principal of the Marischal College; Kames was an eminent judge. Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* appeared as late as 1783, but had long been heard by his pupils; he was already well known for his *Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian* (1763), and for his sermons. Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776) had been maturing for many years; and Kames, with his *Elements of Criticism* (1762), was the earliest to appear in print. All three writers look behind them; they repose upon, and apply, accepted principles; and if they often quote from 'Ossian,' it is because he is regarded as an equal of the old masters and a conformer to the safest canons.

Kames is a dry plodding writer with an original and philosophic mind. He is less a critic of literature than an aesthetician. He starts, on empirical lines, with a psychology of the passions and emotions, far away from poetry; but soon

he reaches the problem of the artistic imagination, which must, he says, be something quite different from mere 'reflective remembrance.' He draws out a suggestive theory, remarkable for its day, of what he calls the 'ideal presence'; that is, the vision, of 'waking dream,' or reverie, which, and which alone, can stir the appropriate feeling, be it of pity, or terror, or admiration, as a bare record can never do. And

> if, in reading, ideal presence be the means by which our passions are moved, it makes no difference whether the subject be a fable or a true history . . . even genuine history has no command over the passions, but by ideal presence only.

The effect is identical, says Kames, whether we read the passionate scenes in *Lear* or the story in Tacitus of the death of Otho. And he proceeds to permute and combine the 'passions' in various ways and to trace their expression in literature, with profuse and apt illustrations from the classical, the English, and the French poets. The elegy of Catullus on the sparrow shows, we learn, 'the pleasure of concord from conjoined emotions'; and *Othello* (here contrasted to its advantage with the *Cid*) affords much illustration of the passions rising to a 'climax.' Literature for Kames is a large, happy hunting-ground for the moral psychologist. Some of his stumbles are singular; he quotes the most beautiful passage in Pope's *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady*, with the remark that it 'deserves no quarter,' being 'eminently discordant with the subject': it is not 'the language of the heart, but of the imagination indulging its flights at ease.' More strangely still, he condemns the text, 'Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant; also our bed is green.' What, we ask, is amiss? And Kames, who now is pronouncing upon 'beauty of language,' mysteriously states that it 'is offending against neatness to crowd into one period thoughts requiring more than one.' This is the Sahara indeed, with the palm-trees out of sight. But we travel further, and they reappear. Inversion is defended, in the spirit of Longinus, on the ground that 'language would have no great power, were it confined to the natural order of ideas.' Kames perceives that this and the other figures of speech are, in Coleridge's words, 'the adopted children of power,' as well as 'the offspring of passion.' But his scheme of versification is conventional enough. A pause *must* not come between adjective and noun, and 'A thousand bright inhabitants of air' is a reprehensible line. Nor is 'a short syllable capable of accent.' Rhyme is 'an unfit dress for great and lofty images';

a remark which is redeemed by another, that blank verse admits of 'a more extensive and more complete melody.' We need not follow Kames further; his pages, at any rate, are a pleasing treasury of quotations. These are nearly always good; although, it is true, he is prone to utter the verse of Rowe or Congreve in the same breath with Milton's.

Blair, as a critic, is the feeblest of the trio; and yet he is the truest devotee of pure literature. His pages on Ossian are a whole-hearted eulogy of the poet with whom, as he finds, only Homer is comparable, and whose existence, in the form presented by Macpherson, is taken for granted.

Aristotle studied nature in Homer. Homer and Ossian both wrote from nature. No wonder that among all the three, there should be such agreement and conformity.

Fingal has 'all the essential requisites of a true and regular epic,' according to Aristotle's 'rules.' But Blair, as we know, was here innocently inverting the facts. It was probably his own worship of the rules that encouraged the astute Macpherson to comply with them. The *Critical Dissertation* is a mere sand-castle, now long crumbled away. The *Lectures*, which were 'read for twenty-four years' to Blair's classes, are soundly and liberally planned. The first sections treat of rhetoric in the stricter sense; of the nature of the sublime, the structure and harmony of the sentence, the figures of speech, and the craft of verse. Then comes a historical sketch of pulpit eloquence, and of the various literary 'kinds' and of their requirements: pastoral, lyrical, didactic, epic, and dramatic. But the comment is sadly flat, and the ideas are mostly derivative. Blair draws on Addison for his theory of taste, on Burke for his notion of the sublime, and on the neo-classic school for his attitude towards the canons. Now and then he refreshes us by breaking away. He cannot swallow the dictum of Bossu that Homer wrote in order to point a preconceived moral. 'He who can believe Homer to have proceeded in this manner, may believe anything.' Such gleams are too rare. Blair is widely read, but his reading does not always serve him well. He considers Tasso 'liable to censure,' because there is 'a strong romantic vein' in him; he describes Shakespeare as a 'genius shooting wild'; and he is capable of saying that the *Œdipus Tyrannus* 'leaves no impression favourable to virtue or humanity.' He holds, with Bysshe, that the pause after the seventh syllable, in a line of ten, is 'the nearest place to the end of the line that it can occupy.' All this is discouraging; but it

tells us, instructively enough, how far official criticism, in the third quarter of the century, had still to travel.

George Campbell is much more rewarding, and some of the *Philosophy of Rhetoric* might well be reprinted. He was an acute reasoner, and his orthodox *Dissertation on Miracles* had earned the respect of Hume. He shows the same shrewdness in assailing Hobbes's theory of the 'passion' of laughter. The sense of the ridiculous is caused, Hobbes had said, 'by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another by comparison whereof they [men] suddenly applaud themselves.' How then, replies Campbell, when we hear men 'telling their own blunders and laughing at them'? 'Utterly inexplicable on Hobbes's system!' This is a good beginning. He has, perhaps, a rather narrow conception of 'wit,' and quotes chiefly from *Hudibras*. Then, on the lines of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, he expatiates on the knowledge that the 'speaker,' the *rhetor*, must acquire of human nature and of the springs of the passions. But at length he reaches the perpetual *crux*. Why do we find pleasure in the representation of things painful? and, after rejecting sundry theories, he relies on the fact that

> pity, if it exceed not a certain degree, gives pleasure to the mind, when excited by the original objects of distress as well as by the representations made by painters, poets, and orators; and, on the contrary, if it exceed a certain degree, it is on the whole painful.

This recalls Kames's doctrine of the 'ideal presence,' referred to above. And, adds Campbell, the pleasure which is thus to be accounted for cannot arise simply from the execution; for do we not know that *ars est celare artem*? The reasoning may not be conclusive; but it shows the writer's instinct for pressing far into a problem. Later, he comes to what he terms 'elocution,' a term that covers both delivery and style. As in all these treatises, much is said of correct grammar and idiom, of the use of neologism, and of the classic canon of Perspicuity. Campbell is duly severe on obscurity and 'fustian'; but he quotes from the *Tatler* to show that certain delicate compliments 'from their very nature demand a dash of obscurity.' His remarks on what Johnson in his *Life of Pope* calls 'representative metre'—the verbal imitation of natural sounds—go deeper than Johnson's. He, too, sees that metre is seldom *directly* 'representative.' In no language

> are the meanings of any words (except perhaps those expressing the cries of some animals) discoverable on the bare hearing to one who doth not understand the language.

Still, quicker and slower motion are partially imitable, as Pope has shown, in language ; and the *Progress of Poesy* shows how a shifting of the measure may reflect the mood :

> the expression of majesty and grace in the movement of the last six lines [*Slow melting strains . . .*] is wonderfully enhanced by the light and airy measure of the lines that introduce them [*Thee the voice, the dance obey . . .*].

Campbell has the righteous instinct of starting with the poetry and not with the rules. What he likes is the quality that he calls, again and again, 'vivacity'; and in the interest of vivacity he brooms away all kinds of 'pleonasm,' 'verbosity,' and the like. Too many 'connectives,' *fors* and *buts*, are the parts of speech 'the most unfriendly to vivacity.' If you must have them, let them be as inconspicuous as the 'pegs and tacks' in a well-turned cabinet. And, in prose,

> if the *whereuntos* and *wherewithals* may be denominated the gouty joints of style, the *viz.*'s and the *i.e.*'s and the *e.g.*'s . . . may not unfitly be termed its crutches.

So Campbell himself is vivacious enough ; and he speaks well upon the native qualities of Latin, with its unequalled conciseness. The phrase *pungent dum saturent*, uttered by the flatterer who is willing to be riddled, or *needled*, if only he may be filled—how many English words, cries Campbell, are required for that ! The modern tongues beside Greek and Latin are like modern dress by the side of the toga and chlamys. Yet English, he holds, is richer in resource than Latin ; whether richer than Greek, is another question. If all professors were like George Campbell, they would probably be in better odour with the laity.

III

A Latin work upon Hebrew poetry might seem to be foreign to English literature ; but not so the *Praelectiones Academicae de Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum* of Bishop Lowth.[1] They were published in 1753, and a translation by George Gregory appeared in 1787, when the book was already of European note. Robert Lowth (1710-1787) held the Oxford chair of poetry from 1741 to 1750, and, in succession, the sees of Oxford and of London ; and, besides sermons and other works, published in 1778 *Isaiah, a New Translation*, with a learned dissertation and notes. The findings of the *Lectures*, which are there partly repeated, fall into two unequal sections, each of them a genuine critical

document. The narrower one is concerned with metre, and sets forth, in a somewhat rigid but most lucid form, and with many instances, the various kinds of 'parallelism' in Hebrew lyric, 'synonymous,' 'antithetic,' and 'synthetic or constructive.' This was true pioneering work, though we are told that some of Lowth's views have been questioned and modified. But his method and spirit, which penetrate the larger section also, were of even more value. He treats the Bible as *literature*, and its poetry as poetry; and those who think it that and nothing more will find little to abate in his account. His comparisons (usually made, no doubt, at their expense) of Homer and Virgil with the Psalmist and the Prophets are full of acumen, and of a kind uncommon in his age. Fénelon, long before, in his *Dialogues sur l'Eloquence*, had touched on likenesses of the kind; but the note of Lowth is the union of erudition, system, and fervour. One of his remarks is in the vein of Matthew Arnold, another lecturer in the same chair, who discoursed *On Translating Homer*. Lowth says, in his third discourse:

> A poem translated literally from the Hebrew into the prose of any other language, whilst the same forms of the sentences remain, will still retain, even as far as relates to versification, much of its native dignity, and a faint appearance of versification. . . . A Hebrew poem, if translated into Greek or Latin verse, and having the conformation of the sentences accommodated to the idiom of a foreign language, will appear confused and mutilated; will scarcely retain a trace of its genuine elegance and peculiar beauty.

His survey of the imagery affected by the Hebrews is by no means out of date. Floods and mountains, the threshing-floor and the wine-press, priestly rites and vestments, the scenes of chaos and of creation, the Exodus and the tables of the Law, all provide figures for the poet; and in the year 1753 it was not a commonplace—nor is it now—to say that

> it is the first duty of a critic, therefore, to remark, as far as possible, the situation and habits of the author, the natural history of his country, and the scene of the poem. Unless we continually attend to these points, we shall scarcely be able to judge with any degree of certainty concerning the elegance or propriety of the sentiments; the plainest will sometimes escape our observation; the peculiar and interior excellences will remain totally concealed. [*Lect. vi.*]

Like so many writers of the so-called rational age, Lowth is much inspired by Longinus; who, says Pope, 'is himself that great Sublime he draws,' and by whom, as one of the ancient

classics, the critics knew that they were authorised to feel the transporting power of words. Longinus himself had quoted the text, 'Let there be light'; and Lowth, adopting his divisions of the 'sublime,' multiplies such examples from Isaiah or the Book of Job. It is nothing that he sometimes pays his due to the fashions of the day, or that we find him turning a verse from the Prophets into the style of Akenside:

> Rise, purple Slaughter! furious rise;
> Unfold the terror of thine eyes;
> Dart thy vindictive shafts around . . .

to represent 'Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers.' And in his 'new translation' of Isaiah he often gratuitously mars the rhythm of the Authorised Version. For all this, Lowth had a real passion for poetry of the intense and uplifted order. We may therefore speak of him in the same breath with the only one of his contemporaries who wrote such poetry under the inspiration of the Bible. Christopher Smart's *Song to David* appeared just ten years after the *Praelectiones*. It is also pleasant to find Lowth dwelling with affection on the rich images of the *Song of Solomon*, that great epithalamy; and accepting, none the less, the parabolical sense that is preserved in the chapter-headings of our version.

IV

Our Shakespeare was, I think, the first to break through the bondage of classical superstition; and he owed this felicity, as he did some others, to the want of what is called the advantage of a learned education. Thus uninfluenced by the weight of early prepossessions, he struck at once into the road of nature and common sense.

The writer, Richard Hurd[1] (1720-1808), does not know of Marlowe, or forgets him; but such an utterance, in the year 1749, or indeed at any time, is clear-cut and refreshing. It occurs in his edition of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, of which the commentary was praised, with various reserves, by Gibbon; and Gibbon said of the writer that few were 'more deserving of the great though prostituted name of the critic.' We need not, indeed, suppose that Shakespeare would have been crushed by a university; but he might have been longer in 'bondage' to the Senecans or to academic wits. Hurd, to his honour, does not reduce the poet to terms of 'common sense'; on the contrary, he enlarges the meaning of the phrase so as to cover the poet.

His letters and commonplace-books throw further light upon his tastes. They are not always liberal; he is capable of saying that 'French poetry is only pure prose in rhyme'; but this is no worse than some pronouncements of Matthew Arnold on the subject. It is clear that Hurd's own ideal of prose was the Addisonian; he censures Gibbon for his 'false taste of composition'; and, on the other hand, Sallust for his 'short, abrupt, sententious, and, I add, affected manner.' His own manner, however, is on the studied side; and it provoked the impatience of Johnson, who (perhaps because he suspected Hurd of Whiggery) observed, 'Sir, he is a word-picker.' Hurd, in return, disliked the antithetical and periodic habit; and in 1800 made this note, which contains some true literary history:

> The pompous, or what may be called the *swaggering* manner, was introduced by Bolingbroke; continued, or rather heightened, by Junius and Johnson; till now it is become the only style that pleases the mob of readers.

Hurd is remembered for his *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, published in 1762. The poems of that year were Falconer's *Shipwreck* and Churchill's *Ghost*. There was also Macpherson's 'Ossian,' which is mentioned in the *Letters*. These go straight back to the true middle ages, and to the English and Italian Renaissance; and their chief aim is to declare that the poetry of both has its own right to exist, and must be judged, not by 'rules' that were not made for it, but by its own purposes. The word Gothic is no longer to be one of reproach. Hurd enters on his tournament with a confidence that shows his superiority to formulae. He finds in the spirit, the code, and the machinery of 'chivalry' the link of continuity between the mediaeval romances on the one part, and Tasso, Spenser, and Milton on the other. Those romances, indeed, had no Homer to make them, and were but 'rude sketches'; but a Homer, had he been there, would have found in chivalry a finer subject than the heroic manners of Greece could afford. Hurd begins by arguing that the age of chivalry, with its passion for arms and adventure, its ideal of courtesy, and its religious zeal, was an actual thing, and that it is reflected, however dimly, in the romances. Moreover, in the Homeric poems, for all their 'barbarous' ingredients, there are many likenesses to the romances: the giants, the magic, and the pastimes of the warriors. 'The resemblance between the heroic and the Gothic ages is very great.'

It was not for Hurd to bring out, like William Paton Ker

in our own day, the deeper difference between 'epic' and 'romance.' His argument is somewhat sinuous; but its aim is to place beyond a doubt the rights of the free imagination. His drift may be gathered from a brief chain of quotations:

'May there not be something in the Gothic romance peculiarly suited to the views of a genius, and to the ends of poetry?'—'The Gothic architecture has its own rules, by which when it comes to be examined, it is seen to have its merit, as well as the Grecian.'—'Judge of the *Faery Queen* by the classic models, and you are shocked with its disorder; consider it with an eye to its Gothic original, and you find it regular.'—'Your classic ideas of Unity, which have no place here.'—'So little account does this wicked poetry make of philosophical or historical truth; all she allows us to look for, is *poetical truth*.'—'The poet has a world of his own, where experience has less to do, than consistent imagination.'—'The imagination, a young and credulous faculty, which loves to admire and be deceived.'

Like Burke, though in another sense, Hurd thinks that the age of chivalry is gone, nay is irrecoverable. And the age of reason has also driven away the enchantments of fancy, as 'lying wonders'; the 'taste of wit and poetry' has taken 'a new turn.' His conclusion is often quoted:

What we have gotten by this revolution, you will say, is a great deal of good sense. What we have lost, is a world of fine fabling; the illusion of which is so grateful to the *charmed spirit*, that, in spite of philosophy and fashion, *Faery* Spenser still ranks highest among the poets; I mean with all those who are either come of that house, or have any kindness for it. *Earth-born* critics, my friend, may blaspheme,

> But all the Gods are ravished with delight
> Of his celestial song, and music's wondrous might.

Such sentiments had been foreshadowed, three years earlier, in the third of Hurd's *Dialogues Moral and Political*. The apt setting is Kenilworth Castle, where Addison and Arbuthnot (who is not so apt for the purpose) debate amiably on the age of Elizabeth. Addison is a kind of *advocatus diaboli*, a Whig deprecating a 'despotic' age, which is also 'barbarous'; Arbuthnot is here Hurd speaking. He praises, above all, the language of that time, as 'pure, strong, and perspicuous':

the high figurative manner, which fits a language so peculiarly for the uses of the poet, had not yet been controlled by the prosaic genius of philosophy and logic.

Hurd's independent views go beyond anything propounded by Joseph Warton, who a few years before had sought to put Pope in his place among the secondary poets. The *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* are more than a historical manifesto; they can be read now, when the victory has so long been won, for their grace and point. But there is one strange thing about them. Doubtless Hurd could not foresee the future of poetry; but he seems insensible to the movement of his own time. He was well enough read, and admired both Rousseau and Metastasio. But he does not acknowledge what was being done by Gray and Collins, or what had been done by Thomson before them. Probably he was engrossed with narrative poetry. But in 1772 he published selections from Cowley, perhaps in answer to Pope's earlier question, 'Who now reads Cowley?' Again, he says nothing of the eighteenth-century Spenserians; he treats Spenser as a neglected poet, in spite of the *Castle of Indolence* and the *Schoolmistress*. Yet nothing can lose Hurd his position as a critic; for he anticipates, in his way, the truth set forth by Coleridge, that a great poem must be judged by the laws which it reveals, and not by those of another domain. Pope had already said as much of Shakespeare; and Johnson, in 1765, was to enforce the plea. But Hurd extends it boldly both to the body of old romance and to the fairy constructions of the sixteenth century.

Hurd's polemics against Hume, his sermons, his official career and preferments, concern us little here. He became Bishop, first of Lichfield and Coventry, then of Worcester; and he was favoured and visited by King George, who is reported to have said of his *Dialogues*, that 'these made Hurd a bishop.' He was accused of suppleness in his political opinions; and it is replied, that it was the sight of the French Revolution which turned his bias from Whig to Tory. His long friendship and alliance with Warburton, and his devotion to that savage divine, exposed him somewhat unfairly to the charge of being a mere satellite. In any case, he is read, and Warburton is not; and it is little to say that he was a better critic. Hurd, as a man, is credited with a 'distant and lofty' air, which betokened a 'disdain of little folks below.' 'Dignified, placid, grave, and mild, but cold and rather *distancing*,' are the epithets of Miss Burney; who adds that 'he was extremely well bred, nevertheless.' Hurd's literary manners are excellent, when it is considered that he wrote in the age of Churchill, Junius, and Smollett.

By way of interlude, and to show the progress of taste, an eccentric of older date may be described. There is a pleasant

flavour of fantasy in the *Essay upon Poetry and Painting* of the Rev. Charles Lamotte,[1] D.D., F.R.S. (1742). The topic is the 'licences' indulged in by the poets and painters: a word which includes anachronisms, historical errors, and improprieties of all kinds. There is, indeed, an appendix on the 'obscenities' which the author has studied, with some care and much indignation, in the works of Parrhasius, 'Rymbrandt,' La Fontaine, and Farquhar. But most of the licences that he deplores are in the nature of 'vulgar errors'; the text is more than once taken from Sir Thomas Browne. St. Jerome should *not* be represented with a clock; and Lamotte, at his leisure, traces the history of sundials and hour-glasses. The painters of biblical scenes are the worst offenders. The Scripture does not say *how* Cain killed Abel; but some say it was with a sword, others with a scythe, and others with a rake. These, at any rate, are more seemly weapons than the jawbone of an ass or 'other animal.' Susanna's Elders should not be 'decrepid old fellows' with 'spectacles on their noses'; for the Greek word suggests a pair of middle-aged magistrates. Alexander must not ride an elephant, and his Bucephalus must not have the head of an ox. The reverend critic censures the mixture of pagan and Christian allusions in poems and pictures. He is also literal-minded; the Virgin, at the Nativity, must not be painted with a crown, nor the soldiers shown as asleep during the Resurrection. Cleopatra, too, must be stung in the arm, and not in the breast. Lamotte has some pertinent remarks on the 'advantages' of larger range, and of changing scene, possessed by the poet over the painter. He closes with a blast of invective (tempered by unwilling admiration) against Rousseau; trusting that, like Aretino, he may repent ere it is too late, and may not find, 'by a sad experience,' *dopo breve canto lacrime eterne*. Lamotte is always unexpected, and never dull.

V

Two critics of real mark, though of wholly different outlook, emerge towards the end of the period, and must be saluted before I proceed to the writers upon prosody. The fifteen *Discourses* (1769-90) of Sir Joshua Reynolds,[2] given to the students at the *Royal Academy*, though primarily concerned with painting, are in fact a review of the principles common to all the fine arts, poetry included; and they are easy to misunderstand. The praises of reason and good sense, of careful copying from the great masters, of 'general' ideas, and of that 'central form,

from which every deviation is deformity,' may remind us too much of the doctrines of *Rasselas*; but Reynolds is far less a devotee of the abstract than his friend and master Johnson. In his *Journey to Flanders and Holland* he admits the instruction given by the Dutch, as by a 'grammar school,' in the 'art of painting,' although it is Italy that teaches the 'higher branches.' A historical portrait, moreover, 'is neither an exact minute representation of an individual, nor completely ideal' (*Fifth Discourse*). Reynolds, of course, inclines towards the 'ideal' treatment; but he does not mean by it vagueness, or emptiness, or want of resemblance to the object; but rather 'nobleness of conception,' and 'beauty and simplicity' in the performance, and the 'intellectual dignity' that separates the painter from the 'mechanic.' He angered Blake by seeming to exalt study at the cost of 'inspiration,' and there are passages that justify Blake's protest. But Reynolds is thinking, for much of the time, of the art of judging art, and not of production; and he comes back at last, not to cold reason at all, but to the 'intuition' that is the fruit of long experience and study. He takes up the question raised by Burke and Addison, what is 'taste'? He pleads, in the wake of Longinus, that as nature herself does not work at random, but on certain principles, so art is not a matter of likes and dislikes, but has principles too, which appeal to all minds that are duly schooled. Genius and taste only differ, in that 'genius has superadded to it a habit or power of execution.' It creates through style; and 'style in painting is the same as in writing, a power over materials, whether words or colours, by which conceptions or sentiments are conveyed'; and taste, in effect, is the power of appreciating style, gained by knowledge of the best things. 'The great end of art is to strike the imagination.' Reynolds applies these canons, outside the sphere of painting, in various ways, to Homer and Shakespeare; his 'instance of repose,' drawn from the picture of Macbeth's castle, where 'the air is delicate,' is well known. His attack on Fielding's account of Partridge at the play is noteworthy. He seems to deny that an 'ignorant man' could mistake Garrick's playing of Hamlet, in the ghost scene, for reality, and to say that such a person would find it unnatural, because 'deception,' or literal resemblance, is *not* the artist's aim. But this only proves, not that a Partridge would not be deceived, but that he does not see what Reynolds sees, namely that the 'merit and excellence of Shakespeare and of Garrick' do not lie in their power to 'deceive,' but are of a 'different and much higher kind.'

Boswell—it is true, on Morgann's own authority—reports the almost unique utterance of Johnson, on a debate in which he 'had the wrong side'; to Morgann he said next day, 'Sir, I have been thinking on our dispute last night—*You were in the right.*' Maurice Morgann,[1] an official in the Mint, afterwards employed in diplomacy, is reported to have been an ingenious and pleasing talker; even when 'in error,' it is said, he 'continued to be specious.' His *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* (1777) is a plea for a paradox, with a quality that reminds us of Lamb. It shows the same gusto and freedom of mind as the essay *On the Tragedies of Shakespeare*, 'considered with reference to their fitness for stage representation.' Morgann's principal point is, indeed, opposite to Lamb's; it is not that the tragedies 'cannot be acted,' but that Falstaff can only be understood *when* acted, and acted in accord with the underlying—not the superficial—intent of the author. Morgann, ahead of his time, shadows forth the theory of the 'unconscious,' or 'subconscious,' working of the mind, which he terms the 'impressions,' as distinct from the 'understanding'; and, by very adroit special pleading, he makes out that our true 'impression' of Falstaff is that he is brave. How else can we 'all like Old Jack'? In a long argument, by no means clearly framed, all the touches in the text that make for the credit and consideration of the knight are arrayed: his seeming cowardice is a pose and a jest, well understood by all concerned; he is to be laughed with, not laughed at; he may have been afraid *once* and have lied in consequence; but he 'was a man of natural courage, though in all respects unprincipled.' Morgann, in a note, really takes off his slightly impish mask, and reveals his method, when he says that the poet's characters should be considered 'rather as historic than dramatic beings'; so that we may reason from their 'latent motives' and 'policies not avowed.' But all this is incidental to Morgann's real aim, which is to bring out and exalt the 'magic' of Shakespeare, and his appeal to our whole nature; and in several passages he anticipates the strain of Coleridge and Lamb:

> He differs essentially from all other writers; him we may profess rather to feel than to understand; and it is safer to say, on many occasions, that we are possessed by him, than that we possess him. And no wonder; he scatters the seeds of things, the principles of character and action, with so cunning a hand, yet with so careless an air. . . . A sceptre or a straw are in his hands of equal efficacy; he needs no selection; he converts everything into excellence; nothing is too great, nothing is too base. . . . Caliban is . . . a

compound of malice, servility, and lust, *substantiated*; and therefore best shown in contrast with the lightness of Ariel and the innocence of Miranda.

VI

The serious study of English prosody was founded, as the historians have shewn, during the eighteenth century. The stream of tracts and dissertations on the subject widens rapidly after 1750; and it is an affluent, though one with many backwaters, of the new poetry itself, which was all the time inventing fresh melodies or recovering old ones. The writers on metre may be studied from three points of view, which are closely connected. (1) At first they try to impose on verse the music of the metronome, which they falsely suppose to be that of Dryden and Pope. Then, stirred by Shakespeare or Milton, or by contemporary poets who break the 'rules,' they try to discover some *canon* which may explain the masters and acquit the rebels. They never quite discover it, because poetry moves too fast to be overtaken; but they tend to limp behind in the right direction. (2) Thus the *history* of prosody began to take shape. Mediaeval verse was not ignored; the music of Chaucer was revealed by Tyrwhitt; the Elizabethan measures, which the poets were copying, were better understood; the versification of Milton was delivered from the snarls of Johnson, who was hard of hearing; and the whole material for study was enriched. In one way this enlargement of knowledge led to confusion. As in Tudor times, the spell of Greek and Latin verse obscured the principles of English metre. Yet (3) it was partly the study of the classics, and partly the study of music, that both quickened and perplexed the endeavour to find out the *rationale* of our verse. Thus were opened the sluices of a debate which has never ceased. Much of it turns on questions of physics. Is 'accent' created by force of utterance, or by quantity, or by pitch, or by some combination of them? And does accent *carry* with it any or all of these elements, though they are no part of its definition? Out of the varying replies sprang the conflicting theories of metre, which were discussed with an almost theological animation. The chief schools of opinion began to be distinguished; and the adherents of the *bar*, of the *foot*, and of the *accent* fell, in a bewildered fashion, into their respective ranks. They came to no understanding, and often refused to ask the same questions; but we need not deride them, for the position is little better to-day. With this

preface, some of the principal metrists of the time may be noted; but the student who wishes to be satisfied must turn to the treatises of modern scholars.[1]

VII

The 'mere mechanic art' of verse (as no good poet ever practised it) had been codified in 1702 by Edward Bysshe, whose *Art of Poetry* (as he termed it) ran to nine editions in the course of sixty years. Bysshe, in effect, describes the *base* of the decasyllabic line, with its regular alternate stresses, and says that it must never be modulated. The pauses, indeed, may vary, but they *must* not come before the third or after the seventh syllable. 'The construction should never end at a syllable where the pause ought not to be made': ought not, that is, according to Bysshe's metrical law, which he assumes authority to lay down. We must cut down *the* into *th'* before a vowel; must not, like Milton, make *riot* one syllable (which Milton does not do); and must write, and also say, *vi'let* and *di'mond* when they are 'used as two syllables.' Also Bysshe thinks that blank verse was 'invented' by Shakespeare. He appends not only a rhyming dictionary, but a *Collection* 'of the most natural and sublime thoughts by the best English poets,' arranged under alphabetic headings, the first of which is *Absence* ('see *Parting*'), and the last is *Zones*. Most of the instances are taken from poets later than 1660; but under *Creation* (which is preceded by *Court*, *Cow*, *Coward*, *Crane* ('see *Pigmy*'), and followed by *Crush'd* and *Cucking-stool*) there are many passages from Milton. A similar garland is found in the *Complete Art of Poetry* (1718) by Charles Gildon, who ranges further, from Spenser even unto Blackmore, and who includes extracts from Dryden's *Virgil* and other translations. These anthologies, like those made later by Goldsmith (Ch. IV.), tell us more than formal criticism can of the taste of the time. Gildon is lengthy (while Bysshe has the grace to be short), in expounding the 'complete art.' His spokesman, 'Laudon,' dialogues unreadably with a patient lady, Manilia, to whom he explains the classic feet. Unlike Bysshe, who is all for syllable and accent (by which he understands pitch), Gildon takes classic 'longs and shorts' as the principle of English verse. Neither argues; but this dispute was presently to become an obsession with the metrists.

The most popular manual of its kind was 'Foster[2] on *Accent*': or, in full, the *Essay on the Different Nature of Quantity*

and Accent (1762), by John Foster, an Eton master. His chief object was to defend the existing accentuation of Greek ; but he opens with a statement of his principles, and of their application to English. Foster is so lucid that his rasher sayings (there are ' not many dactyls in our language, and hardly any spondees ') can hardly lead astray. By ' accent ' he means pitch, and stress he calls ' spirit or emphasis.' The question of English quantities he approaches in a promising fashion, defying any one to say that they do not exist, but repudiating the strict observance of proportions (2 : 1, 3 : 1, and the like). But this regularity he also denies to Greek and Latin, and is thus able to say that ancient and modern prosody are alike. And after all he seems to hold that both systems are ' regulated ' on musical lines. English metre, essentially, is ' founded in quantity alone.' ' The long English heroic, if it consists of pure iambics, has fifteen times ' (*i.e.*, five ' longs,' equal to ten ' shorts,' plus five ' shorts '). For all this, Foster is sensitive to certain metrical effects. He likes the ' nervous springiness ' of Pope's verses ; he perceives the happy sequence of ' pyrrhic ' plus ' iamb,' though he does not quote Marvell's ' in a green shade ' ; and he remarks that the prevalence of vowels in a language makes for harmony. ' Homer's ἠελίοιο . . . is certainly infinitely superior in sweetness to *Chrultnitz* . . . but yet there is quantity in *Chrultnitz*.' For this we can forgive a good deal.

VIII

For some years, before the ebb of the tide was signalled by Joseph Warton's *Essay* of 1756, the reputation of Pope was high, and seemed to be almost stationary ; but afterwards the change accelerated. Warton had declared that Pope was not a master of the greatest themes ; but he had hardly criticised Pope's measure. In 1762 Daniel Webb, who had written some *Observations on Painting*, produced another dialogue called *Remarks on the Beauties of Poetry*. Here Eugenio, in the presence of Aspasia, declaims to Hortensius against the sameness of Pope's couplet ; finds that it is due, in the main, to the want of variety in the ' break ' ; and pours out, with delight, examples from Shakespeare and Milton to show the magical variety of blank verse. ' The expression,' says Webb, ' must often be disgraced when a rhyme is necessary ' ; and Shakespeare, who is free from that risk, is great not only in the ' mechanism of his verse,' but in his command of ' sentimental harmony ' : by which is meant the correspondence of the music

with the feeling. Webb, it is true, adds the inexplicable remark that the poet meant his verse to be 'nothing more than a measured or musical prose' *except* when he intended to 'rise with his subject.' But he also, in passing, anticipates Lessing in his contrast of poetry with painting. He quotes Imogen's lines,

> . . . Nay, followed him, till he had melted from
> The smallness of a gnat to air, and then
> Have turned mine eye and wept;

and adds that the painter, in such a case, could have 'no advantage' from such a '*succession* of ideas.' In his *Observations on the Correspondence between Poetry and Music* (1769) Webb lays down that 'all measures spring from the differences in the quantities of successive syllables,' and in that maze he is lost. But he has the root of the matter; he feels that inversion, which he calls a 'counter-measure,' produces a 'kind of check or suspension in the movement' which is often of 'singular dignity'; and also adds, shrewdly, that the 'vast accession' of polysyllables to the language, and of foreign words, much enhances the modulation of verse. He also speaks well, and indeed better than Johnson, on what Johnson calls 'representative metre.' Imitation of the *sound* (*ululārunt vertice nymphae*) is another and a meaner thing than imitation of the *movement* ('Earth felt the wound . . .'); for here

> the accord springs from an agreement of syllables or sounds not otherwise imitative than as they determine by their succession the nature of the movement.

The blessed word 'movement' is by no means clearly explained; but I linger on Webb, for he is sensitive, unlike many a prosodist, to the *passion* conveyed by metre itself, and he tries to classify the passions and the 'music' that answers to them. They may be gentle, like love; or violent, like anger; or 'exalted,' like pride; or 'relaxed,' like sorrow. Each of these has its appropriate tune; and we recognise an honest effort to come to terms with the impressions left by *Alexander's Feast*, or by Collins's ode on the *Passions*.

A word is due to the sprightly little tract called *Vocal Sounds* (1773) by Abraham Tucker, who writes under the name of 'Edward Search.' Tucker turns Virgil's lines, *Principio caelum*, first of all into some truly dreadful English hexameters ('A spirit internāl penetrātes . . .'), and then into couplets and into blank lines; stating that his friends thought his hexameters 'hung a peg lower' than his other versions. The

friends were right; but Tucker sees clearly how Milton drops his stresses for a harmonious purpose; how, in prose, 'a few lines of poetic measure do no harm,' if they are little noticed; and he tells us how he could read a few pages of Pope's *Homer* 'with great delight,' but could never finish a whole book; it was like dining upon sweetmeats. We expect these firsthand sensations from the author of the *Light of Nature.*

IX

Évery | séntence | ín our | lánguage, | whéther | próse or | vérse, || hás a | rhýthmus || ˊ ˆ pe | cúliar | tó it | sélf; || thát is, in the | lánguage of | módern mu | sícians, || ˊ ˆ it is | eíther in | cómmon time | ˊ ˆ or | tríple time: | ˊ ˆ *vi* | *délicet,* | ***mínuet*** time, | ˊ ˆ or | jíg time, | ˊ ˆ or | míxed. |

Such is Joshua Steele's [1] metrical creed; and the aim of his *Prosodia Rationalis* (1779) is to 'establish the melody and measure of speech, to be expressed and perpetuated by peculiar symbols.' The sentence just quoted, he adorns with many symbols which cannot be given here. But I have marked the bars and the beats; the double lines must be taken to contain bars that are composed of rests or silences and are of course equal in duration to those containing words. The constituents of each bar add up to the correct time. His bars, or units, Steele calls 'cadences.' Sometimes he also calls stress 'cadence,' and he marks three degrees of it—heavy, light, and lighter. I have only noted the heavy ones. He also marks (as I have not done) pitch (acute, grave, circumflex), and calls it 'accent.' This notation is then applied to verse, and here is Denham's line, as 'pronounced by Mr. Garrick':

|| Stróng, with | oút | rage; | ˊ ˆ with | oút o'er | flówing, | fúll ˊ ˆ |.

The monosyllabic bars are duly marked so as to keep the time right. What is vulgarly called a five-foot line has here *eight* bars; and we learn with surprise that 'lines which consist of five cadences, or metres, have less grace and dignity than those of six or eight.' There are many more refinements, but Steele's main principle is clear. He sets down at length, with variations, Garrick's delivery of 'To be, or not to be'; and he gives lists of words, with full notation, telling us brazenly that *miser* is a 'spondee' and *delicate* an 'anapaest.' Once, in Platonic or Pythagorean mood, he listens to the rhythm of the earth, and of life itself:

In the time of the world, a natural day (night included) is a single

cadence; the setting and rising of the sun are the *thesis* and *arsis*; seasons and years are rhythmical clauses; the real beginning and the ending of this melody are out of our sight; but, to human apprehension, the apparent are birth and death, and life is our part in the song.

Steele is thus a distinguished ancestor of the musical metrists whose voices are still heard in the land. His method expresses what he, like his descendants, truly hears or chooses to hear, nay cannot help hearing. The debate is too technical to pursue here; but what Steele, I believe, is really doing is this. In prose, he takes what he thinks to be, and what for him are, the natural stresses and pauses; he sets them to time, and he says that this is the real and only way of hearing the sentence. It is certainly not the only way. Other groupings, which defy his law, are better for other ears. Better, because they are more natural, and do not reduce good prose to a kind of bad verse. The once notable James Harris,[1] '*Hermes* Harris,' has sounder views in his *Philological Inquiries* (1780), and perceives the use of the pæon in English prose rhythm. Aristotle said wisely that prose should only be metrical 'up to a point.' Again, Steele's decasyllabic line is allowed to hold from five to eight units. But the poets, in any case, are satisfied with the five that they have imposed upon themselves: Stróng, with | oút ráge, | withóut | o'érflów | ing, fúll |. I, for one, can just hear Steele's prose with an effort, though it is disagreeable; his verse I cannot hear at all; and so with the modern amplifications of his theory. However this may be, he deserves a tribute for opening a question which possibly, so different are human organs, may never be closed. His book had appeared in a shorter form and without the Latin title in 1775. Much of it is filled with quotations from the metrical sections in Lord Monboddo's[2] *Origin of Language* (vol. ii., 1774), and with Steele's replies. Monboddo, who is well worth consulting, had been partly converted by Steele from his view that accent is created *only* by a combination of 'tone,' or pitch, and loudness; but not, apparently, from his emphatic disbelief in quantity as the basis of English metre. We can, he argues, alter the quantity of any word in a line without altering the metre; and he says, with refreshing decision, if too sweepingly,

> By far the greater number of the syllables being all of an equal length, we cannot so mix long and short together as to make the rhythm of the ancient poetry.

A closely reasoned account of the analogies between musical

and poetic rhythm can be found in Walter Young's *Essay on Rythmical* [*sic*] *Measures*, a paper read to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1786 and printed in its *Transactions* for 1790. Both arts, we learn, 'form the words into parcels according to certain measures and proportions'; and the 'parcels' are bars in the one case, and feet in the other. The same principles only hold 'to a certain extent.' Lines are analogous to musical 'strains,' or phrases. In both cases there is, normally, an alternation (at varying intervals) of 'accented and feeble sounds'; and by accent, in poetry (though not in music, where the accent is 'imaginary'), is meant

> that superior force of articulation, and that inflexion of the voice [pitch], with which we always mark in our pronunciation some particular syllable or syllables in every word.

But here Young, in theory, draws the line; his conclusions are by no means those of Steele. True, he says, a trisyllabic foot 'gives us the impression of something like a dactyl or anapaest'; and yet, he says, in decisive terms,

> in our poetry the syllables are arranged less according to their real quantity than according to the accent with which we are accustomed to pronounce them.

But here he wavers; and soon he speaks of the 'equal or nearly equal times that are marked by the syllables.' And, in his actual scansion, he often reverts to musical principles, isolating the first syllable in a heroic line so as to begin upon a beat, and so with a 'trochee.' On this view the *last* syllable, which is also isolated, unites with the first (leaping over the interval), to make up the 'time.' But this procedure leaves him uneasy; for he sees that the result is quite different in effect from that of real 'trochaic' rhythm. Once quit of these embarrassments, Young steps out more freely. He sees how the fixed dactyl and spondee closing a hexameter or the iamb at the end of a *senarius* stabilise the measure for the ear, whatever the variations elsewhere; and how the same is true, in part, of our decasyllabic line. He is somewhat troubled by English blank measure, saying that it 'perhaps cannot with strict propriety be called verse'; seeing that without rhyme, there is, to our 'inconvenience,' no 'distinct return' marking off the line. But this, which at first seems unpardonable, has a meaning. It is hard, in a line that 'runs on,' to respect at once the metre and the continuity of the sense. Yet, although blank verse may not be 'strictly verse,' Young finds that it is something very good;

for it seems 'to unite the freedom, variety, and energy of prose with the softness and elegance of verse.' Young's argument is throughout so lucid and so punctiliously stated that we can see exactly where he halts; and his paper does much to clear the issue.

X

In 1774, a year earlier than Steele's first treatise, appeared William Mitford's *Essay upon the Harmony of Language*; and in its enlarged and rewritten form, as *An Enquiry into the Principles of Harmony in Language* (1804), it remained a standard book on prosody until the *History of English Rhythms* (1836-8) by Edwin Guest. The *Essay* itself merits notice if only for its comprehensive plan, which in the *Enquiry* is retained. Mitford deals first with the 'principles,' then with the 'mechanism,' and then with the history of versification; and this last section, in the *Enquiry*, is greatly expanded. The *Essay* is also one of the first attempts to describe in detail the heroic verse of Milton; and Mitford touches on most of the features which the present Laureate has fully analysed: on doubled stress, and dropped stress, and inversion, and trisyllabic feet. He is much fettered by his habit of foisting into English the rules of classical quantity, and also by the notion that a 'regular' foot is in some way more virtuous than one in which the metrical base is varied. Inversion, he unluckily calls 'aberration.' But Mitford is to be more fairly judged by his *Enquiry*, in which he usually takes a wary and judicial view of the vexed questions.

Even here he is still sufficiently in bondage to ancient prosody as to read, or rather to write, *dŭel* and *dĭal*. But he explains (as I believe, correctly) how far 'music and sweet poetry agree,' and where they part company. Accent, he says, is a 'time-beater'; and he accepts, on sufferance, the terms common and triple time to denote respectively the units – –, ⏑ ⏑ – and the units ⏑ ⏑ ⏑, – ⏑, ⏑ –, with their various equivalents. But by his 'longs and shorts' he comes to mean, like most modern scanners, heavy and light syllables, which need not be (and that least of all in dramatic verse) in regular time-ratios:

> In regard to any regular agreement between musical times and syllabical quantities, a general indifference is obvious.

He sees that to divide a line of five 'iambs,' in musical fashion, by severing the first syllable, in order to open with a stress or

'trochaic' foot, is a deed of violence; and with much good sense he adds:

> As, then, the arrangement of music in bars has been decided by the convenience of the musical performer, without any consideration of the connection of music with poetry, so the arrangement of the syllables of verse should be decided by the convenience of metrical analysis, without regard to those divisions which music has established for its own separate purposes.

Mitford's discussion of 'mechanism' shows that the metronome was now almost out of date, and that the ghost of Bysshe was disappearing. Trisyllabic feet, we hear, commonly add majesty to the flow, and much to the expression,' of the decasyllabic line. Also anapaestic and dactylic, as compared with iambic, rhythms 'more immediately and decidedly throw language out of the ordinary march of prose.'

Mitford's history of versification, though full of errors, marks a great advance in knowledge and sensibility on all previous sketches. It is, literally, a retrospect; he travels backwards from Shakespeare to Surrey, Chaucer, and Old English. He tries to reduce Anglo-Saxon verse, and also *Piers the Plowman*, to a scheme of anapaests. And he lets fall a single word which is the relic of a whole age of superstition:

> Where Shakespeare has been in any degree careful, his verses are *still* among the easiest in the language.

But he appreciates 'Winter wakeneth all my care,' and Drayton's *Shepherd's Sirena*, and many other good things. Also, while apparently ignorant of Tyrwhitt's discoveries, he makes some good guesses at the prosody of Chaucer. He begins to explore not only Greek and Latin but French and Italian verse; and he listens, where others had only theorised. A Tory, writing in the year 1804, and also a votary of accent, he is amusingly deaf to French as the language of poetry, and compares it to the sound of the bagpipes. But his next sentence takes us well away from all measuring and counting, and from the physics and physiology of metre:

> The sounds of the Greek language may be compared to those of a fine violin; joining the greatest sweetness with the most various powers; the sounds of the Latin may be compared to those of a harsh violin, of power still great, but less various, and of far less engaging sweetness: the sounds of the Italian resemble those of a fine flute, the sweetness exquisite, but the power inferior.

In his chapter on 'euphony' Mitford faces some of the real problems of the craftsman. English, he says, is doubtless overloaded with monosyllables; but for this drawback there are compensations. There are numberless polysyllables of learned origin, to act as counter-weights. And besides, monosyllables can take or lose their accent in a happily elastic fashion. Shakespeare can write them, for many lines running, with the best effect:

> Good friend, thou hast no cause to say so yet,
> But thou shalt have; and creep time ne'er so slow,
> Yet it shall come for me to do thee good.
> I had a thing to say, but let it go:
> The sun is in the heaven, and the proud day . . .

In the *Enquiry* there are many such flashes; but Mitford's real praise is that he begins at the right end, with the facts of metrical history, and that he points forward to a true method.

XI

Too many of these writers approach poetry from the side of theory, and forget to ask how it is *heard*: heard, either as spoken, or else in the mind's ear. It is otherwise with the actor Thomas Sheridan (1719-1788), the son of Swift's companion, and father of the dramatist. In his *Lectures on Elocution* (1763), *Lectures on the Art of Reading* (1775), and *General Dictionary of the English Language* (1780), there is excellent advice on the right way of speaking verse and prose, and a suggestive account of English rhythm. Sheridan, it is true, is not wholly original; he struggles with a phonetic system of his own; as an Irishman, he was not the best authority on the sounds of native English; and he is tangled [1] in the perennial debate over accent and quantity. But his opinion is clear, that our verse is constituted by feet and not by syllables; that English quantity, though it exists, is too 'mutable' to serve as a basis for prosody; and that the terms 'iambic' and the rest should be used, without prejudice, to denote arrangements of heavier and lighter stresses. These principles bear fruit when Sheridan reaches the poets, the Bible, and the Prayer-Book. He has a true and sensitive ear for the correspondences between the rhythm and the feeling or the sense. Using a notation of his own, he scans out many verses and many texts with great skill. Like Mitford, he makes some real contributions to the problem of Milton's prosody; and, though we need not accept

all his scansions, and his ear fails him when he refuses to admire the poet's 'double trochees,' he lets his imagination work in tracing the emotional effect of different cadences. In the words 'Lay flóat | ing mány | a roód,' he says 'the idea of floating is aptly expressed by a continuity of four short syllables.' He analyses well the arrangement of pauses and 'semipauses'; Denham's classic lines, 'Though deep, yet clear . . .,' he finds, owe their effect to just this modulation. Sheridan also duly recognises and admires Milton's freedom in shifting the 'break.' He is still held, if only by a thread, to the orthodox view that it is most 'melodious' when coming after the fifth syllable, or after the fourth or sixth, in a line of ten. But even here he does good service, pointing out (what is still sometimes ignored) the delightful variety which Pope, at his best, can attain even within these limits. He also notes that in verse the metrical is not always the same as the logical pause; and, on reflection, decides that the former, not the latter, should be observed in recitation. Thus, in the line

> And from about her shot darts of desire,

the sense bids us break after *her*; but,

> pronounced in that manner, with the pause in the middle of the line, it ceases to be verse; but by placing the caesura after the word *shot* . . . the metre is not only preserved, but the expression much enforced by the unexpected trochee following the pause, which, as it were, shoots out the *darts* with uncommon force.

It is not true that the line 'ceases to be verse'; but we do not echo Johnson's unjust remark on Sheridan: 'such an excess of stupidity, Sir, is not in nature.' The stupidity is on the other side. In scanning prose Sheridan traffics little in 'feet,' and keeps chiefly to accent; but he corrects, in passing, many a false emphasis. He also aptly quotes the saying, reported by Quintilian, of Caesar to a bad declaimer: 'If you read, you sing; and if you sing, you sing very ill.'

XII

All this while, despite the efforts of Mitford and the rest, the prosody of our old masters was ill understood. It was not till long afterwards that the verse of Shakespeare and Milton could be sounded, approximately, as those poets intended. The theorists who wrangled, however instructively, over accent,

quantity, and pitch might well have devoted a tithe of their pains to the real history of English metre. It was natural that the older poetry should be the least understood ; and we do not blame the age for not foreseeing Sievers's analysis of Anglo-Saxon measures. But on Chaucer very few of the prosodists touched at all ; he still appeared to be outside all rule, as Dryden had supposed : 'a rough diamond, and must first be polished, ere he shines.' John Urry's edition of 1721 had given less than no help in the matter ; and the statement of Thomas Speght in the preface to his edition (1598, 1602) was forgotten, as it had been by Dryden, simply because it had never been proved :

> And for his verses, although, in divers places, they seem to us to stand of unequal measures, yet a skilful reader, who can scan them in their nature, shall find it otherwise.

The skilful reader was to be, of course, Thomas Tyrwhitt [1] (1730-1786), F.R.S., who had been Clerk of the House of Commons, and whose valuable edition, with his Latin translation, of the *Poetics* was splendidly printed at Oxford after his death. Tyrwhitt, at the age of nineteen, had published, without his name, a curious *Epistle to Florio at Oxford*, in heroic couplets, in which he fervently declares his conversion to Whig principles and adjures his friend to follow his example. In 1766, inspired by Johnson's edition, he produced *Observations and Conjectures upon some Passages of Shakespeare*, containing able emendations. Besides other works, mostly on classical subjects, he published in 1777 the first edition of the *Rowley Poems* (Ch. xv.). But Tyrwhitt's true field was mediaeval literature. An admirable linguist, he brought his knowledge and trained acumen to bear upon the poet who most needed them and who could best reward them. In 1775 he published his edition of the *Poetical Works* in four volumes, together with prefatory matter, an 'essay on the language and versification of Chaucer,' and an 'introductory discourse to the *Canterbury Tales*.' In 1778 he added a glossary, as well as an 'account of the works' which marked an epoch in the establishment of the Chaucer canon. Here Tyrwhitt retained some poems which have since been rejected ; yet, at one blow, he swept away a mass of unauthentic matter which had distracted the judgment of critics. Of the genuine works, he edited only the *Canterbury Tales*, a good many MSS. of which he compared ; but, in doing this, he furnished a key, or tuning-fork, by which the music of the rest could be comprehended. 'The art of the grammarian,'

it has been well said, 'has seldom been better justified, and there are few things in English philology more notable than Tyrwhitt's edition of Chaucer' (W. P. Ker). Lovers of poetry, and scholars, from Sir Walter Scott onwards, have been at one in saluting this performance. Tyrwhitt's illustrations and notes to the *Tales* are still of value; but his achievement, as already observed, was to ensure that Chaucer's melody—no longer only a 'Scotch tune'—should be heard and understood. Grammatically, the clue lay, partly in the discovery of the laws governing 'the pronunciation of the *e* feminine,' which had soon become 'totally antiquated'; and partly in that of Chaucer's accentuation; but Tyrwhitt also pleaded in the name of common sense. His grasp of the subject, and also of language, can be seen in two short paragraphs:

> The great number of verses, sounding complete even to our ears, which is to be found in all the least corrected copies of his works, authorises us to conclude that he was not ignorant of the laws of metre. Upon this conclusion it is impossible not to ground a strong presumption, that he intended to observe the same laws in the many other verses which seem to us irregular; and if this was really his intention, what reason can be assigned sufficient to account for his having failed so grossly and repeatedly, as is generally supposed, in an operation, which every ballad-monger in our days, man, woman, or child, is known to perform with the most unerring exactness, and without any extraordinary fatigue?

And again:

> We are not to expect from Chaucer that regularity in the disposition of his accents, which the practice of our greatest poets in the last and present century has taught us to consider as essential to harmonious versification. None of his masters, French or Italian, had set him a pattern of exactness in this respect; and it is rather surprising, that without rule or example to guide him, he has seldom failed to place his accents in such a manner, as to produce the cadence best suited to the nature of his verse.

Tyrwhitt's resources did not enable him to see, what he denies, that Chaucer now and then writes a line of nine syllables, with the first omitted. But his tests lead him to insist on what is much more important, namely that very many, if not the greater number, of the lines are lines of eleven, with a spare light syllable at the end. All this is now known in schools; but Tyrwhitt's service ought not to be obscured, for the laity, by the admirable labours of those who have built on his foundations.

It is no part of the present scheme, however, to trace the course of English scholarship during the period: the students of Spenser, from Hughes onwards; or the textual editors of Shakespeare—Theobald, Capell, and the rest; or the successive commentators on Milton. But the critics just reviewed may serve as a transition to the graver kind of 'applied' literature; and the remaining chapters will touch on some of the divines, philosophers, publicists, and historians, chiefly from the literary point of view.

CHAPTER XVII

PHILOSOPHY AND LETTERS

I

DURING this age the record of letters and the history of thought[1] are closely interwoven. But they are never the same; it is an accident, if a great philosopher is a good writer; and thinkers like Hutcheson and Hartley, who are of little note for their form, must be passed over more summarily. Berkeley, Hume, and Adam Smith offer no such difficulty. Unlike their great forerunners Bacon and Hobbes, whose speech, with all its magnificence and energy, is foreign in our ears, Berkeley and Hume wrote after the pattern of prose had become defined; their tones sound familiar, and they write as we should like to dream of writing. And the prose of Berkeley has the quality of beauty as well, in a measure that is denied to Hume and all other philosophers of the time. But these two between them have all the gifts (except perhaps that steady energy and magnificence of the older writers) which beseem a philosophical style: they have precision, coherence, lucidity, urbanity, and grace. They speak the polite and equal language of men, and do not talk from the chair. The rugged utterance of the solitary Butler is an exception in his own day. Latin had almost gone out in Britain as the *lingua franca* of abstract thought. Samuel Clarke, the metaphysical divine, had used it on occasion during the preceding age; Newton had long found it the surest instrument for gaining the ear of the world; it survived in Berkeley's *De Motu*; and, as late as 1742, in Hutcheson's *Philosophiae Moralis Institutio*; but it was ceasing to be even a second language for speculation. French and English usurped the field. The prose of Malebranche has the virtues of the *grand siècle*, touched by the Greek spirit, and rarefied. Here, the new habit of the vernacular had been made popular by Locke, who used the idiom of the plain man with good effect but little grace. The mob of deists had followed suit, and the too elegant Shaftesbury, like his foe the able anti-moralist Mandeville, had kept to English. The causes that fostered this change have

their root in the preceding century. Our Revolution is a convenient dividing line between the old, erudite pre-critical temper and the new. The English or Latin writings of More, Cumberland, and Cudworth are different in method and manner from those of the age of Anne. The ruling impulse was now to make philosophy more popular. The advance of science and of the critical spirit generally ; the example of French prose ; the focussing of literary society and debate in London ; and the aversion of the wits to what they deemed pedantry, were all contributory forces. And the wits themselves, confident in their own capacity to speculate, had made it their business to instruct the laity. The *Essay on Man*, Addison's papers on the imagination and on design in nature, and the verses by Arbuthnot entitled *Gnothi Seauton* are examples.

In the second quarter of the century few of the greater issues of secular thought or of theology are wholly divorced from letters. Logic, indeed, first philosophy, and the theory of knowledge cannot be popular studies. The debate on causation made a kind of noise owing to Hume's assault on miracles ; but the laity cared less for the argument than for its supposed consequences. Nor, in spite of his *Essays*, were they much concerned with the analysis of the mental mechanism. It was otherwise with the theory of morals and of human motive. We can hardly realise what burning topics these were in the reign of George the Second. The man in the coffee-house kept asking himself, however confusedly, some vital questions. Do I ever feel, and act, in a fashion that wholly eliminates self-regard ? Is benevolence real, and is it more than self-love disguised ? Surely it is : but, if so, then what is the nature of its prompting ? Is it simply one natural instinct or emotion the more, one amongst many that compete ; an instinct which may indeed bring me pleasure, but which does not win its driving power from the pleasure that it brings ? Or is there, again, something within me that is *sui generis* and apart ; which constrains and imposes, often in opposition to what is at least my apparent good ? If the former, and if 'true self-love and social are the same,' are there still not cases when these two principles refuse to coincide, like the folds of a cloak that will not meet in a gale but leave an ugly gap between ? If the latter, if Conscience is not simply one motive the more, then whence comes its authority ? and is the order of *this* world such as to persuade me always to obey its authority ? What are 'merit and demerit,' in essence ? These questions, bearing hard on life and behaviour, quickly reach the unphilosophic

mind, and emerge from the endless discussions concerning the origin, connections, and sanctions of our moral ideas.

Such discussions, in formal shape, abounded ; and, for all the importance of Berkeley and Hume to world-philosophy, the most original and independent contribution of Britain was to moral theory. There was nothing elsewhere to rival the long line of writings which may be said to begin with Samuel Clarke's Boyle lectures (1704-5), in the one camp, and, in the other, with Bernard de Mandeville's rhymes on the *Grumbling Hive* ; and to close, at least for the time, in 1759, with Adam Smith's *Theory of the Moral Sentiments*. Every five or ten years is marked by the appearance of one or more ethical works that count in the debate. The first stage is marked by Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* (1711) and Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* (1714), with its prose argument newly added. Mandeville, who pushed the egoistic tenets of Hobbes to his own conclusions with humorous brutality, gave much provocation ; and in the second stage (1725-36) Butler and Hutcheson, who keep up a kind of duet, frame their answers. The third phase (1739-51) belongs to Hume, who works out a moral and psychological calculus of his own. Fourthly, from 1749 to 1759, come the treatises of Hartley, Price, Brown, and Adam Smith. After Abraham Tucker's *Light of Nature* (1768-78) the line is thinner ; but Bentham and Paley are in sight. So profuse is the material. Much of it falls before our dates, much of it is not literature, and no historical survey of thought is here attempted. Nor will I do more than mention the mass of ethical psychology, or *morale observatrice*, or, more simply, of general remarks on human nature, which is found not only in the professed philosophers, but overflowing into literature at large. The pair of friends, Hume and Adam Smith, who both knew the world, are peculiarly rich in such matter. So, too, are some of the essayists, the poets, and the novelists. The great masters of the craft, apart from the systematic thinkers, are Johnson and Fielding, with their conflicting codes. Is not Allworthy meant in part as a living refutation, and Blifil as a repulsive pattern, of Hobbism as a principle of practice ? The hostile and friendly allusions to ' enthusiasm,' [1] found in every type of writer, form a chapter in themselves. Young and Pope discuss benevolence and the ' ruling passion ' in iridescent rhymes. The later handling by Sterne of ' sentiment,' or the calls of the heart, is really an offshoot of the same debate. It is time, however, to refer specially to those of the methodical thinkers who can fairly also be called writers.

II

In 1730, no one could doubt who was the first, the greatest philosophical author of the time, and the most abstruse defender of the faith against the materialist. As a collegian at Trinity College, Dublin, George Berkeley [1] (1685-1753) had already been groping his way towards the key-thought of his system. His *Commonplace Book*,[2] not printed till 1871, shows the process, and how he studied Plato and Malebranche as well as Locke. Such models could only kindle that instinct for the nicer beauties of form which, as I have said, separates Berkeley from his age and raises the new social English into a loftier air. But he also learnt the lesson of that age. Eloquence and harmony must be controlled and enriched by the law of simplicity and clearness. It is agreed that no English reasoner is a better artist in argument and in the use of words. Berkeley is seldom technical, except in his exposition of optics; he uses the speech of every day, with what has well been called an 'exquisite facility.' 'I am willing,' he writes, 'to be understood by every one'; and again, in the *Commonplace Book*:

> I abstain from all flourish and power of words and figures, using a great plainness and simplicity of simile, having often found it difficult to understand those that use the lofty and Platonic, or subtil and scholastique strain.

He keeps this promise, except in his latest and hardest work, the *Siris*; and his style is as fresh to-day as ever.

Berkeley, then, asked and answered very early his radical question as to the nature of our knowledge; and from the first he kept in view its ultimate theological bearings. He fired his first shot from distant trenches against the unbeliever in his *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* (1709); and in his *Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710) he opened all his batteries. In the *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* he brought up the cavalry. His theory of 'immaterialism' was now almost complete. In the pamphlet of 1733, the *New Theory of Vision Vindicated*, can be seen the links of the long chain between his analysis of apparent visual distance and his theological *finale*. I quote but one passage from the *Principles*, to exhibit Berkeley's manner, his leading theorem, and also his reply to the first cavil against it which occurs to the natural man:

> It were a mistake to think, that what is here said derogates in the least from the reality of things. It is acknowledged on the

received principles [*i.e.* those he is combating] that extension, motion, and in a word all sensible qualities, have need of a support, as not being able to subsist by themselves. But the objects perceived by sense, are allowed to be nothing but combinations of those qualities, and consequently cannot subsist by themselves. Thus far it is agreed on all hands. So that in denying the things perceived by sense, an existence independent of a substance, or support wherein they may exist, we detract nothing from the received opinion of their *reality*, and are guilty of no innovation in that respect. All the difference is, that according to us the unthinking beings perceived by sense have no existence distinct from being perceived, and cannot therefore exist in any other substance, than those unextended, indivisible substances, or *spirits*, which act, and think, and perceive them: whereas philosophers vulgarly hold, that the sensible qualities exist in an inert, extended, unperceiving substance, which they call *matter*, to which they attribute a natural subsistence, exterior to all thinking beings, or distinct from being perceived by any mind whatsoever, even the eternal mind of the Creator, wherein they suppose only ideas of the corporal substances created by him: if indeed they allow them to be at all created. [Sec. xci.]

These last ten words are significant; for Berkeley proceeds to explain 'how great a friend material substance hath been to atheists in all ages,' and to denounce the systems that

exclude all freedom, intelligence, and design from the formation of things, and instead thereof make a self-existent, stupid, unthinking substance the root and origin of all beings.

I will not try to draw out the implications of a thesis with which the philosopher, and not only the chronicler of philosophy, has still to reckon. Enough to mention Berkeley's denial of the reality of abstract ideas; his plea that 'ideas,' meaning the objects given by the senses, are purely passive, so that no causal tie can exist between them, and no mechanism, therefore, can explain their recurrence; his conception of the self, or subject, in which all 'ideas' subsist, so that we can properly have no 'idea' of it at all, but only what he calls a 'notion'; and his grand conclusion, which saves the stability of an apparent world of matter, namely, that all 'ideas,' and therefore the world in question, owe their permanence to the fact that they subsist in the mind of God.[1] In the *Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous* the same reasonings are cast into more Attic form; and both works may be commended, not only for their charm of manner, but as an overture to philosophy for any one innocent of that pursuit, who would plunge straight into the question,

What is existence ? Let him see if he can make a better case for the independent being of a table or a glove than does the discomfited and rueful Hylas. Hylas no doubt is a man of straw, like some of the victims of the Platonic Socrates. And if the craft of dialogue is to make the utmost of both sides, then Hume is the better craftsman of the two ; for in the *Dialogues on Natural Religion*, as we shall see, the author and his convictions almost vanish behind a screen of smoke. It should be added that Berkeley's idealism shows no trace of the temperament so often allied with such theories. The messages of sense are to him no dream, or illusion, or *maya*. He is concerned to show that they remain more valid than ever when their fictitious substratum is gone. ' The horse is in the stable, the books are in the study as before.' Such a conclusion suits well with the practical and concrete spirit which pervades Berkeley's career.

III

There is a long gap between his earlier and his later publications. From 1713 onward he travelled abroad, first as chaplain to the Earl of Peterborough, Swift's 'Mordanto,' and then as tutor to a young gentleman. Swift, as the *Journal to Stella* shows, had found him introductions. His letter to Pope on the *Rape of the Lock*, and a later one to Arbuthnot describing Vesuvius, are worthy of a great age of correspondence. By 1721 he was home ; he became Dean of Dromore, and then of Derry. During middle life he was engrossed in his scheme to found a college in the Bermudas for the training of Red Indian missionaries. It failed ; Walpole never gave the promised thousands ; and Berkeley never reached the Bermudas, but tarried for three years in Rhode Island, where he wrote his *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher* (1732). Returning, he was made by favour of Queen Caroline Bishop of Cloyne, where he lived many years ; and he died at Oxford. *Siris* (1744) is his only later work of note ; but Berkeley, first and last, wrote many other tracts, on politics and economics ; his sallies into mathematics are pronounced to have been less fortunate.

Alciphron appeared four years before Butler's *Analogy* and is part of the same general 'defensive-offensive' campaign against unorthodoxy. But it is as much wider in its purpose, as it is looser in its reasoning. Butler, in assailing the consistency of the deist, strives for the sake of the argument to realise his point of view. Berkeley makes no real effort to do so, but seeks to overthrow at once the materialist, the ' atheist,' and the

sceptic of every brand. And as in his *Dialogues*, he sets up, and knocks over, a lay figure [1]—or rather two such, who make a wanton present of the most deadly admissions whenever they are hard pressed. As men, Alciphron and his rasher understudy the young Lysicles are as real as Plato's Protagoras or Thrasymachus. Yet there is the implication, all through, that such persons are not only weak-headed but cannot really believe in or practice virtue at all. For all this, the setting, the irony, the subtlety of statement, and the English are as good as ever. The book presents with wonderful clearness almost every issue of natural theology then in dispute. Each of the seven dialogues is complete, in its admirable setting. If *Alciphron*, for all its wit, and the grace and beauty of its language, is not quite worthy of its author, it is because he is plainly working towards a fixed conclusion ; he is not letting his mind play freely in search of truth, and he will hardly believe that his opponent can be honest. As Voltaire said, 'this is a party book, rather than a religious book.'

Twelve years later, in *Siris*, we perceive that Berkeley's mind has travelled far, and has in a sense travelled backwards. The temper, and sometimes the diction, recall the abstruse and imaginative musings of a century earlier. It is not clear how far he had studied Sir Thomas Browne and the Platonists of Cambridge. He uses many Latinisms like *illapses*, *inspissate*, and *rejectaneous*, which he might not have permitted himself in the age of Addison. And he mixes, in the pleasing old fashion, pseudo-science and whimsies with poetical metaphysic ; he slips by queer transitions from terrene themes to celestial. He begins by commending at length the panacea of tar-water, which he administered himself to all who would partake. The chemistry of tar leads to that of the vegetable world at large, and this to more mysterious matter. The 'forms, souls, or principles of vegetable life subsist in the light, or solar emanation.' Thence to the occult virtues of air, in which there is 'some latent vivifying spirit dispersed.' The transition is easy to the subject of fire, and so to that of the 'ether, or pure invisible fire,' which 'seems to pervade and expand itself through the whole universe' ; nay, which is 'no other than the vegetative soul or vital spirit of the world.' And in that world 'there is a spirit that moves, and a mind or Providence that presides.' Mind is the primary cause of things, but this fiery ether is their instrumental cause. The conception of mind 'resident in fire' suggests a review of many Chaldaic, Chinese, Persian, and Hebrew opinions, and a reference to the neo-Platonists (much

drawn upon in *Siris*) who hold that light is incorporeal. After a brief reversion to tar-water, Berkeley launches into the philosophy of causation, and repeats the great proposition of the *Principles of Knowledge*, that no mechanism of 'matter' can explain the final or efficient causes of phenomena, which are all mental and passive; and that an incorporeal agent, or Mind, is necessary for the immediate production of every single phenomenon. Hence it is easy to pass to final causes, and so to the supreme good. 'Intellect enlightens, love connects, and the sovereign good attracts, all things.' Diffused through the world there is a soul which constitutes its principle of unity: 'the first Mover, invisible, incorporeal, unextended, intellectual Source, of life and being.' The relation of Mind to the world is now plainer; and the way is clear to the summit of Berkeley's speculation. He draws the vital analogy, long since intimated by the neo-Platonists, between the three persons of the Trinity and the three 'hypostases' of intellect, life, and goodness; or, otherwise stated, the Good, the Word or *logos*, and Love. The close is Plato unadulterated:

> As for the perfect intuition of Divine things, that he supposeth to be the lot of pure souls, beholding by a pure light, initiated, happy, free and unstained from those bodies, wherein we are now imprisoned like oysters. But in this mortal state, we must be satisfied to make the best of those glimpses within our reach.

Such a book, published in the year 1744, may be thought of either as a survival, or as a symptom of intellectual reaction. The last writer of this type had been John Norris [1] of Bemerton, the English adapter of Malebranche; his *Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World* had appeared in 1701-4. In Berkeley's mind there must always have been an undertow of the transcendentalism which is markedly absent from his *Principles* and *Dialogues*. Otherwise, coming a few years after Hume's first batch of *Essays*, and a few years before Middleton's work on miracles, the *Siris* seems a kind of literary meteor. But meteors too have their law; and if there is one law that can be counted on in the history of thought, it is the law of revulsion. In the heart of the 'age of reason' there is the hunger for something that does not rest on logic, for something that may satisfy the mystic vision and the desire of the mind for unity. And herein Berkeley reflects the slow tidal movement, as yet little evident, of the time. It can equally be traced in William Law (see Ch. XVIII.), who was drawn away about the same date from satire, portraiture, and plain preaching, into the mysteries of

Boehme. And in 1738, in the meeting-house of Aldersgate Street, the decisive inner message came to John Wesley. The dialect of the three men is different ; each would have rejected the findings of the other two ; but all of them show the impulse towards vision and intuitive conviction and away from the rule of the mere understanding. This tendency concurs with the revival of poetry by Thomson, Gray, and Collins, and in general with the renewal of the sense of beauty. Still, in *Siris* Berkeley reaches a kind of speculative *cul-de-sac*. The work could have no influence on philosophy. Not in *Siris*, but in the *Principles*, can be found the point of departure for Hume. And the turn given by Hume to immaterialism would have revolted Berkeley. For Hume destroys the reality of that self, or subject, or mind, in whom and for whom, to Berkeley, all experience subsists. There is no sign of Berkeley having read Hume, most of whose speculations were before the world in 1743.

One more example may be given from *Siris* of the Platonic style. We could wish that Berkeley had translated Plato, and in the first of these sentences he almost does so. It is clear how the emphasis has shifted since the date of the *Principles*. The data of sense now recede in favour of the supreme visions of the intellect ; and although these visions *are* truly of the intellect, and not ineffable revelations, and are therefore not mystical in the strict and historic meaning of the term, yet the intellect, in this context, is a very different faculty from the discursive reason, to which most of divines and sceptics of the time alike appealed.

> Human souls in this low situation, bordering on mere animal life, bear the weight and see through the dusk of a gross atmosphere, gathered from wrong judgments daily passed, false opinions daily learned, and early habits of an older date than either judgment or opinion. Through such a medium the sharpest eye cannot see clearly. And if by some extraordinary effort the mind should surmount this dusky region, and snatch a glimpse of pure light, she is soon drawn backwards, and depressed by the heaviness of the animal nature to which she is chained. And if again she chanceth, amidst the agitation of wild fancies and strong affections, to spring upwards, a second relapse speedily succeeds into this region of darkness and dreams.
>
> Nevertheless, as the mind gathers strength by repeated acts, we should not despond, but continue to exert the prime and flower of our faculties, still recovering, and reaching on, and struggling, into the upper region, whereby our natural weakness and blindness may be in some degree remedied, and a taste attained of truth and intellectual life. Beside the constant prevailing opinion of the greatest

men of antiquity, that there is both a universal spirit, author of life and motion, and a universal mind, enlightening and ordering all things, it was a received tenet among them, that there is also τὸ ἕν or τἀγαθόν, which they looked on as the *fons deitatis*, the first hypostasis in the Divinity. [*Siris*, secs. 340-1.]

IV

Berkeley's other writings often display his peculiar eloquence and his sensibility to nature. His description in a letter to Pope of the island of Inarime may be set beside the clear and lightsome Platonic scenery, said to be painted from that of Rhode Island, in the fifth dialogue of *Alciphron*. The picture here is from life, the manner natural ; the rhetoric which besets the poetry of the *Seasons* is absent ; and such passages, though commoner afterwards, are somewhat rare in middle Georgian prose, and indeed in Berkeley himself.

> Here we had a prospect on one hand of a narrow bay or creek of the sea, enclosed on either side by a coast beautified with rocks, and woods, and green banks, and farmhouses. At the end of the bay was a small town placed upon the slope of a hill, which from the advantage of its situation made a considerable figure. Several fishing-boats and lighters gliding up and down on a surface as smooth and bright as glass enlivened the prospect. On the other side we looked down on green pastures, flocks, and herds, basking beneath in sunshine, while we in our superior situation enjoyed the freshness of air and shade. Here we felt that joyful instinct which a rural scene and fine weather inspire. . . .

Berkeley's tracts on public affairs show a mixture of hard sense, wisdom, and fierce unseeing prejudice. He has sometimes been called a saint ; and in truth he merits all honour for his depth of heart, his self-sacrifice, and his blameless behaviour ; but he is capable of surprising extremes. His sermon on *Passive Obedience*, written during the last years of Anne, when he was closely allied with the high Tories, is an example. One of the eternal and divine 'laws of nature' is the absolute duty of non-resistance to the supreme civil power. This is

> no less constant and unalterable a rule for modelling the behaviour of a subject towards the government, than *multiply the height by half the base*, is for measuring a triangle.

Berkeley, we see, revolted from Locke's Whig principles as well as from his theory of knowledge. And he forestalls divines like Tucker and Paley in the emphasis that he lays on

posthumous reward and punishment as the ultimate sanction of morality. It pays much the best, in both worlds, to obey an eternal 'law' like that of non-resistance. A loftier spirit fills the *Essay towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain* (1721), an assault delivered, just after the bursting of the South Sea bubble, on luxury, gambling, idleness, and loose living. The singular book called the *Querist* consists of some six hundred pointed questions, each carrying its own answer, and largely addressed to the native Irish. Berkeley, like his friend Swift, addresses his flock in a tone of disgusted pity and contemptuous benevolence. The advice also reminds us of Carlyle's. Let the Irish save, and work, and develop their industries, and clean up their houses and themselves:

> Whether Ireland be not as well qualified for such a state as any nation under the sun? Whether in such a state the inhabitants may not contrive to pass the twenty-four hours with tolerable ease and cheerfulness, and whether any people on earth can do more? Whether they may not eat, drink, play, dress, visit, sleep in good beds, sit by good fires, build, plant, raise a name, make estates, and spend them?

This done, education, religion, and letters may be reared on a decent foundation. Carlyle might have hailed the question whether 'all sturdy beggars should not be seized and made slaves to the public, for a certain term of years.' But we ought to leave Berkeley with another note than this in our ears—the note of his verses 'on the prospect of planting arts and learning in America.' These are to be such as Europe 'bred when fresh and young, When heavenly flame did animate her clay,' and not such as she 'breeds in her decay'; and here occurs the line, 'Westward the course of empire takes its way,' the authorship of which is not always remembered.

V

Berkeley's feeling for beauty finds its way into every corner of his language. His contemporary Francis Hutcheson [1] (1694-1746) leaves no such mark on our mind, and is a somewhat awkward and difficult writer; although we hear of him as effective in the professor's chair. Nor is he the author of a system, but an eclectic who passed through many phases. For that very reason he is of great note in the history of ethical and aesthetic theory. Hutcheson threw into circulation, if he did not discover, three or four seminal ideas with which his

successors had to reckon. He gave a clear shape to the theory, inherited from Shaftesbury, of a 'moral sense' or faculty; a special and ultimate perception divinely furnished, which enables us to value our own actions and those of others. Next, in his revulsion from Hobbes and Mandeville, he tends to reduce all the virtues, including even such personal ones as temperance, to forms of 'benevolence' or goodwill. Thirdly, and exploring quite another track, he begins to work out what was afterwards called the 'utilitarian calculus' of actions, in terms of pleasure and pain; and seems to have been the coiner of the phrase 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number.' Lastly, once more in the wake of Shaftesbury, he tries to analyse further the sense of beauty. He finds that, like the moral sense or the sense of honour, it is something disinterested and ultimate, although it is many-sided. His conception of beauty is partly sensuous, as when we admire the stars or the harmony of sound; and partly moral, for he says that 'virtue is a lovely form'; but it is also highly abstract, intellectual, and even geometrical. Hutcheson informs us that a square is more beautiful than a triangle; and perhaps he would think Euclid i. 47 more beautiful than a tree. Still, on the side of art and letters, here is his chief service to his time. 'Human nature,' so he puts it, 'is not left quite indifferent in the affair of beauty'; but, as we know, in the age of George I. English human nature was more indifferent than it had been for two centuries. Thinkers like Berkeley had the feeling in abundance, but they theorised on it little; and in Hume or Adam Smith afterwards it appears chiefly as a liking for classic elegance. Hutcheson, therefore, like Addison, is a pioneer in this field. He figures also in mental philosophy and logic, and his writings are copious. His four earliest treatises, printed in Dublin, are of most significance. They comprise two *Enquiries* (1725), one upon *Beauty, Harmony, Order, and Design*, the other on *Moral Good and Evil*; and two other works, one on the *Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*, the other being termed *Illustrations on the Moral Sense*. He also published, amongst other things, a Latin compendium of ethics; his ponderous *System of Moral Philosophy* appeared posthumously, in 1755. Hutcheson, a Scot born in Ireland, was for the better part of his life professor of moral philosophy in Glasgow, and a great luminary in that world; and he was attacked, at one period, by the local presbyters for what they thought a too liberal theology.

VI

David Hume [1] (1711-1776), one of the master-minds of his century and the maker of an epoch in modern philosophy, is an example, like Berkeley, of the occasional precocity of genius. At sixteen while still a boy at Edinburgh University he had already hit on certain clues to his leading principle : ' drawing the outlines, on loose bits of paper : here a hint of a passion ; there a phenomenon in the mind accounted for.' Within two years, struck with the futility of the ' endless disputes, even in the most fundamental articles ' of speculation, he was led to ' seek for some new medium by which truth might be established ' ; and, he says, ' there seemed to be opened up to me a new scene of thought, which transported me above measure.' This must have been the key-conception of his *Treatise of Human Nature*, thought out during his stay in France (1734-7), and composed chiefly at La Flèche. Published in 1739-40, the book was ignored, though Hume judged that its principles would ' produce almost a total alteration in philosophy.' And this they did, although not in the way that he supposed. The above forecast of the theory was written when he was only twenty-six. Hume started with a magnificent indifference to all intellectual tradition and authority : a temper afterwards to be combined, as not rarely happens, with political Toryism. Also he is from the first a humanist, in his own fashion. He is as fond as Bacon or Cowley of quoting parallels from classical antiquity, and he was ' seized,' he tells us, ' very early with a passion for literature.' His humanism is amusingly one-sided ; he is a classicist to the root. In a youthful essay (not printed by himself) he refers to that ' monster of romantic chivalry, or knight-errantry,' and of the ' extravagant ' homage paid to chastity in the Middle Ages. In such remarks he is a man of his day ; but he is something before his day, and forestalls by several years the poetic praises of Collins, when he commends ' the Grecian models of art,' which are ' plain, simple, and regular, but withal majestic and beautiful.' And visiting Mantua later, David Hume ' kissed the earth that produced Virgil.'

The book that fell ' dead-born from the press ' was, to give its full name, *A Treatise of Human Nature, being an Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*. But the treatise form and the bristly title did not make for popularity or minister to the ' love of fame ' which Hume informs us was his ' ruling passion.' Soon, in order to be

read, he made many concessions to this weakness. He chose the politer and easier form of the essay; and thereby won, though not very rapidly, a great audience both in England and in France. In 1741-2 he produced the first instalment, entitled *Essays Moral and Political*; thinking that they might, as he put it, 'prove like dung with marl, and bring forward the rest of my philosophy.' After an interval, during which Hume first became tutor to a mad marquis and then travelled to Paris and Vienna as secretary to a general, he returned enriched. His repute was fully established by his *Enquiry* (at first called *Philosophical Essays*) *concerning Human Understanding* (1748), and his *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751). Into these works, also cast in essay shape, he distilled the *Treatise*, dropping the abstruser sections and burnishing the style but sacrificing many of the racier illustrations. It was probably in this form that Hume was afterwards read, with results momentous to philosophy, by Kant. He continued his operations in the *Political Discourses* (1752). The *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* were also written about this time, though not printed till 1779, after his death. By 1757 Hume had completed his speculative writings with the *Four Dissertations*, namely those on the *Natural History of Religion*, *Of the Passions*, *Of Tragedy*, and *Of Taste*. By this date he was already half through his *History of Great Britain*, which is noticed hereafter (Ch. xx.), and which was finished in 1761. For the rest of his life he wrote little. He was long librarian of the Advocates' Library in his native city of Edinburgh. In 1763-6 while secretary at the embassy in Paris he was taken to the bosom of French society as an illustrious philosopher and writer; and these are Hume's years of triumph. In both countries he befriended Rousseau, and the tract in which he defends his own part in the notorious quarrel is admirably composed. In 1769 after a short service as under-secretary of state he settled in Edinburgh, and remained to the last the pride of the Paris of the North. The fragment entitled *My Own Life*, which is indispensable for the understanding of Hume, was printed by Adam Smith in 1777, the year after the author's death, along with the two papers on *Suicide* and on *Immortality*.

VII

Hume disclaimed the *Treatise* as a juvenile work, but it gives his deeper mind; and Thomas Hill Green, the Oxford Hegelian, who reprinted it in 1874 with a hostile commentary, saw that

the book was the true fount of origin for the English school of empirical philosophy and the most thoroughgoing statement of its principles. Every history of thought records Hume's commanding and decisive position. The *Treatise* has also its place in literature. Less easily written, it is fresher, more consistent, and dialectically closer-meshed than the *Enquiries*. In these abridgments we miss some of Hume's most curious observations. In the *Treatise*, the 'passions,' or feelings, of mankind are analysed with wonderful address, and by the application of an intricate mechanism called the 'double association of impressions and ideas.' In describing love, pride, or compassion, Hume produces a store of what he terms 'pretty curious phenomena,' which are of interest apart from their context. Often they take the form of riddles. *Why*, and when, and with what limitations, does 'insensibility under misfortune' in a sufferer only 'increase our concern for the misfortunate'? *Why* does 'a certain degree of poverty produce contempt,' while 'a degree beyond produces compassion and goodwill'? *Why* do children find that their tie with a mother, who has married again, is more seriously weakened than if a father does the like? *Why* was the behaviour of the Athenians 'nothing extraordinary,' when they threw out a certain undisclosed proposal of Themistocles, simply on the word of Aristides, who told them that nothing could be more advantageous, and yet nothing more unjust, than to adopt that proposal? *Why* should an oak sapling, that overtops and destroys the parent tree, not be charged with parricide? *Why* is it hard for us to feel, or to admit, that the voice of our enemy can be a musical one, unless we are 'a person of a fine ear, who has a command of himself'? These, at least, are not commonplace notes. Hume's solutions must be read in the *Treatise*. His tone throughout is that of the anatomist, who, as he observes, 'is admirably fitted to give advice to a painter.' He himself disclaims all inventive power, and speaks purely as a man of science. A short passage may be given to show Hume's style, and his amusingly cool temper, in this sort of discussion. The italics are not his own.

> But, again, as facility converts pain into pleasure, so it often converts pleasure into pain, when it is too great, and renders the actions of the mind so faint and languid, that they are no longer able to interest and support it. And indeed, scarce any other objects become disagreeable thro' custom, but such as are naturally attended with some emotion or affection, which is destroyed by the too frequent repetition. One can consider the clouds, and heavens, and

trees, however frequently repeated, *without ever feeling any aversion*. But when the fair sex, *or* music, *or* good cheer, *or* anything that naturally ought to be agreeable, become indifferent, it easily produces the opposite affection.

These passages come by the way, when Hume is well advanced with his argument; his theory of knowledge, and behind this his psychology, form the scaffolding for his account of the moral and other feelings. Without offering even a diagram of his great sceptical fabric, or of the problems to which it gives rise, it is possible to throw light on some of Hume's mental features. Enough to say that he seeks to discard the whole of Locke's left luggage and every other *a priori* assumption. The solvent applied by Berkeley to the material substratum is now applied to the spiritual one. Hume abolishes Berkeley's 'self,' and Butler's 'living agent,' with its continuous identity; Berkeley's *deus ex machina* having become equally superfluous. The most famous passage on this topic may be quoted once more:

For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are removed at any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of myself, and may be truly said not to exist. . . . If any one, upon serious and unprejudiced reflection, thinks he has a different notion of *himself*, I must confess that I can reason no longer with him. . . . He may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continu'd, which he calls *himself*: tho' I am certain there is no such principle in me. But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. [*Treatise*, pt. iv., sec. vi.]

All, therefore, is now subjective; only, there is no subject. Philosophy seems to have become psychology. Hume's shade has always been challenged to show how, on his premisses, even such a science can be possible. He proceeds, however, in the *Treatise* and elsewhere, calmly to build up the mechanism of thought, feeling, and will, out of the flux of isolated 'impressions'; and he does it with surprising ingenuity. These disunited incidents, or 'distinct existences' as he calls them, somehow group, and act on one another, chiefly through a mysterious power of 'attraction,' or customary association. Such is our experience: it is woven of impressions, and their

fainter copies called 'ideas,' thus grouped. Whether that experience has any ground, or cause, outside itself, cannot be ascertained. Nay, the idea of cause is itself but an illusion based on a customary conjunction of like ideas. Why there should be such a custom we do not know. Least of all have we reason to believe in the reality of a cause within ourselves. Our sense of a free, or undetermined, choice is one more illusion, and the last. Such are some of the rudiments of Hume's sceptical doctrine. One grand difficulty, arising from his denials of personality, of thought as separate in nature from sense, and of causation, was at once apparent. How does Hume make a knowledge of fact possible, or ever reach that external order, which seems to be implied in his every passing reference to the world, and which in practice he owns that he cannot repudiate? He tells us that his conclusions fade away when he sits down to backgammon with a friend. In this contradiction Hume honestly reposes. He has followed his logic to its issue and there stops dead. Refute the logic, he says, if you can; I cannot. He will not concoct some final reconciling synthesis, when he cannot get one. A note appended to his *Treatise* shows how clearly and candidly he recognised his ultimate antinomy. All this shows Hume's rare mental integrity, the true source of his power. He stated the problem which drove the Common Sense philosophers at home, and Kant in profounder fashion, to look again into the foundations of knowledge. The *Treatise* and the *Enquiry* have an unmistakable air of personal experience and conviction. The passage quoted, *I never can catch myself* . . . is remarkably like a central tenet of Buddhism, a cult of which Hume can hardly have heard; and it is strange to find this Oriental mood in the Scottish archimandrite of the 'age of reason.'

Hume goes on, as we have seen, unperturbed, to make his stream of impressions the basis for his moral psychology. His opponents have followed in his tracks, and have spent themselves, not without admiration, on his consistent reduction of all impulse and motive to pleasant and painful impressions; on his elaboration, out of these, of the 'passions'; and, out of these once more, of the virtues and vices. They have shown how steadily he elbows out the conceptions of obligation, duty, and right, as independent values, and as they are understood by the plain man; and how Butler's presiding 'conscience' vanishes from the programme. Hume shows no consciousness here, as he does in his theory of knowledge, of coming up against the dead wall of fact. He is quite sure that others, like himself, can

find, upon his theory, a valid and sufficient code of behaviour. Benevolence, generosity, equity, temperance, he thinks that he has explained and commended perfectly well. They are his own virtues, and he does not seem to have struggled for them. He seems to know nothing about struggle. It is plain enough, on grounds not simply of high philosophy but of human experience, what Hume leaves out. But his type has its own kind, and that not a low one, of perfection, and it also marks one of the great extremes of the eighteenth-century spirit. Still, as we shall see, his contentment with things as they are is not so thorough as it may appear.

VIII

Hume's theology springs out of his philosophy. The chapter *Of Miracles* in his *Enquiry* (1748), which reverberates still, and which produced a polite and most acute rejoinder from George Campbell,[1] as well as a mass of forgotten protests, is only a step in a long complex argument. If there be nothing at all but a flux of individual impressions; and no permanent objects, or outer world, so that it is idle to ask who or what made it; and no enduring self, or soul, to be known, saved, or lost; if belief be only one feeling the more, and not even so much as an idea, and if to believe in a creed is only to have a particular feeling; if prayer be 'a kind of rhetorical figure,' and if God is 'not the natural object of any passion or affection'; if nothing is good or bad in itself, except as reducible to the impressions called pleasure or pain; if, again, obeying common instinct, and for the sake of the argument, we do assume an external order and a soul, and therewith a mind, or something 'bearing a remote analogy to' a mind, which is their origin—a mind, too, that may have made the world and men with certain intentions;—but if we cannot assume, supposing these intentions to be amiable, that the mind cherishing them is all-powerful, inasmuch as we cannot 'establish the conclusion in a greater latitude than the phenomena of nature will justify'; and if we can still less surmise any prospect of a far-off divine event:—then, if all this be so, there is only one thing left to do with religion. Is this to reject it outright and disregard it? Not wholly so. Hume will consider that alternative in his *Dialogues*, which are to be published after his departure. No, he says unexpectedly, the thing to do is to *study* religion. See its basis in human nature; consider not the logic, but the growth, of the 'phenomenon.' The result is the *Natural History of Religion*.

The arch-sceptic is the first writer in Britain to glance at the development of human belief from a detached point of view, and in the spirit of the future. His material, no doubt, is meagre. He knew nothing of the prophetic speculations of Vico on sociology and the origins of religion. The *Scienza Nuova* had appeared first in 1725 ; its final edition came in 1744 ; but this great treatise, with its forecast of the theory of human evolution, was little regarded for a century. Hume, however, is a pioneer too, if in a far smaller way, and in spite of the fact that throughout his little work he means mischief.

He shows that polytheism came before theism ; so that the latter, whatever may be its logical validity, has no primitive authority. Theism may be in itself the higher form of creed ; but it has not always been so historically. Its nature is to degenerate. 'Men have a natural tendency to rise from idolatry to theism, and to sink again from theism to idolatry.' Nor is this merely the Romish idolatry, which is as bad as the Protestant 'enthusiasm.' Worse than this, men first of all form the idea of a perfect deity, and then proceed to tamper with his perfection. They imagine 'inferior mediators, or subordinate agents, which interpose between man and their supreme deity' ; and of these demigods they make images to worship. Hume drops this high-explosive remark in his usual calm style ; and proceeds, that the advantage is not all on the side of theism. Paganism is not so monstrous after all ; and, with his good-humoured irony, Hume looses his other bomb :

> And, in short, the whole mythological system is so natural, that in the vast variety of planets and worlds contained in this universe it seems more than probable that, somewhere or other, it is really carried into execution. The chief objection to it with regard to this planet is that it is not ascertained by any just reason or authority.

And he plainly thinks that the popular creeds, so far as they have told on morality at all, have told for the worse. Here Hume speaks not in irony but with deep assurance, in the very voice of the age of the 'enlightenment' :

> Examine the religious principles which have, in fact, prevailed in the world. You will scarcely be persuaded, that they are anything but sick men's dreams : or perhaps will regard them more as the playsome whimsies of monkies in human shape, than the serious, positive, dogmatical asseverations of a being, who dignifies himself with the name of rational.

At the end of the book Hume quits the historical ground and becomes a sceptic once more, doubting, and doubting his own

doubts. 'The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery.' But the *Natural History of Religion* was not his last word.

The *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* were written in 1751 and must be read together with Hume's letters of that date. Their real drift is to the last somewhat obscure. The burden of the debate lies on Cleanthes the believer in design and final causes, and on Philo the sceptic, while Demea the orthodox *a priori* reasoner cuts a poorer figure. Philo resembles the Hume that we know, and we should expect him to triumph. But, then, in the very last sentence Pamphilus, the young listener, pronounces that the principles 'of Cleanthes approach still nearer to the truth' than those of Philo. And Hume in a letter to Gilbert Elliot says that Cleanthes *is* the hero and that he wishes to find more and better arguments for Cleanthes, and that Elliot himself, had he been conversing with Hume, would have filled the part of Cleanthes well. But Hume wishes to make the plea of Cleanthes 'correct, formal, and regular.' What does all this mean? Just, I think, that Hume is Philo after all; that he wishes to make the very best of the enemy's reasoning, both in fairness and for dramatic effect, and that Pamphilus's remark is that simply of a raw youth who has assumed theism from the outset. Yet Philo, be it noted, does not end in total doubt. He is ready, though with all possible safeguards, to assent to a sort of attenuated natural theology, if only it comes to no more than the

> somewhat ambiguous, at least undefined proposition, 'That the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence.' If this proposition be not capable of extension, variation, or more particular explication; if it affords no inference that affects human life, or can be the source of any action or forbearance. . . . If this really be the case, what can the most inquisitive, contemplative, and religious man do more than give a plain, philosophical assent to the proposition, as often as it occurs; and to believe that the arguments on which it is established exceed the objections which lie against it?

Hume is here serious, and speaks in person. It is the furthest point to which he will go; and though to others it may seem but a little way, it is a great way for Hume. How, on his principle of a flow of impressions, any 'order' at all, real or apparent, can be found in the world, is another question. But the dialogues are his greatest and deepest composition; the picture of evil and imperfection betrays a passion which is rare in his pages. And there is real debating; the scales are held

carefully; the issues are put with a sharpness that is not impaired by time; and a kind of Roman gravity reigns over the discussion. In other moods, he reveals a more placid scepticism; and Lord Charlemont reports him as saying, concerning the doctrine of immortality:

> Why, troth, man, it is so pretty and comfortable a theory, that I wish I could be convinced of its truth; but I canna help doubting.

Here, too, as so often, is felt the contrast between the surface and the deeper currents of Hume's nature. There is the familiar Hume, bland, dispassionate, and serene, who is supposed to typify the 'complacency' of the period. We know Lord Charlemont's picture of the philosopher in the Paris theatre, 'between two *jolis minois*,' with his 'broad unmeaning face,' smiling away; and the story of his consoling the frantic Rousseau with a pat on the shoulder and a 'Quoi donc, quoi donc, cher Monsieur!'; and the other scene, already named, where Sterne and he rally each other about miracles. He seems to be one of those enviable people whose machine works without friction. This, too, is the Hume of the correspondence with Elliot or Adam Smith. But there is another Hume, who watches man's life at large with a kind of dismayed melancholy. The *Dialogues* contain pages that might come out of *Rasselas* or Leopardi's conversation between *The Almanac-Seller and the Passer-By*:

> Ask yourself, ask any of your acquaintance, whether they would live over again the last ten or twenty years of their life? No; but the next twenty, they say, will be better:
>
> And, from the dregs of life, hope to receive
> What the first sprightly running could not give.
>
> Thus at last they find (such is the greatness of human misery, it reconciles even contradictions) that they complain, at once, of the shortness of life and of its vanity and sorrow.

And again, as an illustration of the 'optimistic' century:

> Look round this universe. What an immense profusion of beings, animated and organised, sensible and active! You admire this prodigious variety and fecundity. But, inspect a little more narrowly these living existences, the only beings worth regarding. How hostile and destructive to each other! How insufficient all of them for their own happiness! How contemptible or odious to the spectator! The whole presents nothing but the idea of a blind Nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children.

IX

Hume's political and economic ideas, which are scattered through his *Treatise*, his ethical *Enquiry*, and his *Essays*, are of high importance. His papers on money, credit, and kindred matters, were of great use to Adam Smith. His long article *Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations* won a compliment from Gibbon. He has a complex series of speculations on the origin of society, property, government, and justice, in which he smites hard at the legend of the 'original contract,' conceived as a conscious transaction at a fixed point of time. To believe that all the governed ever consented to be governed is to do the people 'a great deal more honour than they deserve, or even expect and desire, from us.' He rejects alike the despotic reading of the bargain by Hobbes, and the Whig reading of Locke; and substitutes for both the conception of a gradual and half-conscious process, resting on a 'tacit consent,' which gradually begets, by association, the feeling of duty, or 'allegiance' to the governors; the original motive of self-interest, or utility to the individual, becoming obscured. For this intrusion of social duty, there may be no true foundation in his moral system; but, whatever he may say of its origins, Hume finds it in existence, and makes it a kind of corner-stone. All this points onward, however dimly, to the thought of another age; and Hume, once more, is a true pioneer. We do not expect him to have Burke's deep imaginative sense of the social bond. But we see how his mind was turning to his historical studies. One article of his creed is the balance of power; and, to read him, we might almost think that in sanctity it stood above the ties of race or the faith of alliances: so great is his dread of a single oppressive empire, such as that of Macedon. And yet, drawing everywhere on the wisdom of the ancients, he also seems to hold, with Chesterfield and Gibbon, that mankind had never been happier than under the benevolent despotism of the Antonines. In discussing passive obedience he considers that there are rare emergencies in which it is right to resist; as may be seen from the leading case of Charles the First, and also, 'if we may now speak truth, after animosities have ceased,' from that of James the Second. Both of these monarchs, says Hume in his favourite tone of classic irony, or understatement, 'it became necessary to oppose with some vehemence.'

The political essays, like the rest, are in his usual flowing inartificial manner. One exception is the striking *Idea of a*

Perfect Commonwealth, written with masterly concision and in brief atomic sentences recalling those of Hobbes. But Hume may be said to have redeemed the essay form. Since the death of Addison, though very fertile, it had become more and more flimsy and ephemeral. Hume and Johnson put more brains into the essay than any successor until the appearance of Hazlitt. And Hume, unlike Johnson, has his full share of the polite ease required. His English may be in one sense learnt English, with a faintly studious turn ; but it has little left to learn. The traces of Scotticism and Gallicism, which he tried hard to excise from his *History*, are not obvious in the *Essays*. He is untouched by the Latinising, and almost free from the tedious balancing, of the more rhetorical school. Part of his method is to say destructive things in an affable, conversational voice. His irony, kindly except at the expense of the theologian or the demagogue, pervades his too brief scrap of autobiography, and his letters, and also his death-bed talk as reported by Adam Smith ; in which Hume begs the indignant Charon for a respite, so that he may correct his printed works for a new edition.

The essay *Of Simplicity and Refinement in Writing* shows Hume's tastes and ambitions in the matter of style. Steer, he says in effect, between excessive ' wit ' and excessive bareness. The former, into which Mr. Pope fell, is the worse extreme ; for ' wit and passion are entirely incompatible.' Lucretius is, so it appears to Hume, too bare ; and we should not expect such a critic to prefer austerity and grandeur. But some of Hume's likings modify our preconceived ideas of his coolness and phlegm. He names Catullus, of whom ' each line, each word, has its merit, and I am never tired with the perusal of him ' ; and remarks that ' of all the great poets Virgil and Racine, in my opinion, lie nearest the centre, and are the farthest removed from both the extremities.' This may be fairly set against some other remarks, which led Wordsworth to call Hume the worst critic of his time.

X

It is hard to think of Adam Smith [1] (1723-1790) apart from his friend and inspirer Hume. Both were Scots, and were humanists of the same type : steeped in the classics, and drawing by instinct upon classical example. They worshipped elegance, grace, clearness, and symmetry, caring little for the newer poetry. Hume is the greater writer ; but the prose of

Adam Smith wears excellently. Both were men of the world, eminently social, lights of Edinburgh ; and both, after they had made a name, received an ovation in Paris from wits, philosophers, and great ladies. Unlike Hume, Smith was also at home in London, tolerant of the English (although not exactly congenial to Johnson), and a member of the Literary Club. And he had more oddity in his composition than Hume; talked to himself, and swayed his body 'vermicularly'; and became a legend, as a type of the absent-minded man. He once, so it was alleged, put bread and butter into the teapot instead of tea, and complained that the tea was the worst he had ever had. He had more heat and impulsiveness than Hume ; and once, when a certain person had left the company, he exclaimed : 'We can breathe more freely now ; that man has no *indignation* in him.' We hear that Adam Smith had 'large gray or light-blue eyes,' which are said to have beamed 'with inexpressible benignity': a trait reflected in his moral theory, which turns entirely on the emotion of fellow-feeling with the joys, griefs, and passions of others, and upon the power of the 'man within the breast' to effect 'an imaginary change of situation' with those others. Hume, like his theory, is more detached ; but both writers have a basis of cool and balanced judgment, and both are curious observers of mankind, with a passion for truth however unwelcome, and for checking their deductions and hypotheses by fact. Both, lastly, left an ineffaceable mark on thought ; Hume, no doubt, by producing critics as well as followers, and by revising nearly all philosophical values ; while Smith, who, it was prophesied by some unknown person, 'would persuade one generation and govern the next,' lived to see Pitt his disciple, and to be told by him (such is the tradition) at a dinner-party, 'We will stand till you are first seated, for we are all your scholars.'

The career of Adam Smith, like his temperament, was even and little distracted. As a student at Glasgow, he sat under Hutcheson, who awakened his bent for philosophy. At Balliol he read hard, but unaided ; and has left, in the fifth book of the *Wealth of Nations*, a well-known and withering account of Oxford and its instruction. At Edinburgh he lectured on English literature as well as on economics ; and he edited the poems of Hamilton of Bangour. His discourse on the *Imitative Arts*, with its shrewd notes on artistic copying, and on the relations of statuary, painting, and music, is earlier than Burke's book *On the Sublime*. Then, returning to Glasgow as professor of logic (1751-1764), he sketched in lecture much of the plan of

the *Wealth of Nations*, and delivered to his pupils the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. This work appeared in 1759; a sixth edition, now much revised and augmented, was to be published in the last year of Smith's life. In 1760 Sterne had paid his visit to London, to enjoy his new and suddenly acquired fame It is strange to contrast the freakish 'sensibility' of *Tristram Shandy* with the Scottish, sane, and measured analysis of the feeling of sympathy. Then, in 1764, Smith travelled with the young Duke of Buccleuch; and, having already begun to write the *Wealth of Nations*, gathered much new material in France. In Paris he was made welcome, associating with the freethinkers, d'Holbach and Helvétius, with Turgot, and with the school of 'physiocrats,' led by Quesnay. With these he found much in common; but his main economic ideas had been conceived long before. Retiring to his birthplace, Kirkcaldy, Smith completed, and in March 1776 published, the *Wealth of Nations*. The first instalment of the *Decline and Fall* had come out in February, and for the moment was the more popular; but the *Wealth of Nations*, also an enduring work, was at once recognised; in time, too, for the congratulations of Hume, who died in August. It went through several editions during Smith's lifetime, and was revised by him and expanded. He spent the rest of his days in Edinburgh, with occasional descents on London, much honoured and regarded.

Adam Smith, at first, had some of the bad habits of a good professor. The *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, with its formal structure, its useful repetitions, its edifying sallies, and its avoidance of too abstruse fundamental issues, may suggest overmuch the admiring classroom. But it has also the appropriate virtues, and many more. It is, in fact, literature; which a good deal of the monumental *Wealth of Nations*, to speak fairly, could not be. In its own field, the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* is one of the most original and arresting books of the time. It has that easy transparent flow, of which the art is now long lost, and which makes for the swiftest of reading; the eye being also caught, but not interrupted, by the points and illustrations that relieve the argument and arise out of a full mind. But the ordinary reader shuns it, as philosophy; and the philosophers, not without right, complain that Smith provides no real scaffolding of logic, or even of psychology, for his ethics. Also, that he never reaches the *crux* of his own problem, or faces the question whether there are, or are not, absolute values, and true 'imperatives,' in our moral economy. Like Hume, he certainly eludes the ultimate question of the

inner conflict. It is also urged that he seeks, and fails, to deduce from his principle of sympathy (or 'put yourself in his place') those conceptions of duty and conscience, which in fact lie behind that principle, and give it ethical meaning; and that, in the long run, he arrives at no universal standard at all, but reposes merely in the findings of an imaginary person, namely his celebrated 'impartial spectator,' by whose instincts morality is to be measured.

These are abatements, and yet Adam Smith's description of mental phenomena, so far as it goes, is that of a master. His analysis of joy and grief, of resentment and gratitude, of self-deceit, of ambition, and of the influence of fashion, compares well with any other account of these 'passions' that I can think of. The argument is too intricate to summarise here; but, broadly speaking, it is an attempt to trace the action and reaction of feeling between two parties: one, the party who, as Smith puts it, is 'originally concerned,' and who first feels a particular 'passion'; the other, a real or ideal spectator, his fellow-man (or society of fellow-men), in whom, by sympathy, the passion is reflected or reproduced. A, say, is grieved; B instinctively puts himself in the place of A, and feels a grief, resembling A's in quality, though not of course in degree—some octaves lower. Though these sentiments 'will never be unisons, they may be concords, and this is all that is wanted or required.' But then A, who is *also* putting himself in B's place, now apprehends this weaker grief of B's, and 'reduces' his own grief in violence; 'conceiving some degree of coolness about his own fortune.' Through such continued interplay of sympathies arises a common standard of what, and how much, it is proper to feel; and hence, too, a canon of approbation and disapprobation, and the idea of duty. But Smith's inferences are perhaps less striking than his observations by the way.

He traces skilfully the element of illusion that besets all human sympathy. We 'sympathise,' he remarks, 'even with the dead'; whose happiness, however, is unaffected by the dark images we form; and 'it is from this very illusion of the imagination, that the foresight of our own dissolution is so terrible to us.' And yet, like other such deceptions, it is a beneficent provision of nature; for the fear of death, as a punishment for crime, is 'the great restraint upon the injustice of mankind.' Another illusion, of less value, is the importance we attach to great personages and their feelings.

All the innocent blood that was shed in the civil wars, provoked less indignation than the death of Charles I. A stranger to human

nature, who saw the indifference of men about the misery of their inferiors, and the regret and indignation which they feel for the misfortunes and sufferings of those above them, would be apt to imagine, that pain must be more agonising, and the convulsions of death more terrible, to persons of higher rank than to those of meaner stations.

For all his emphasis on sympathy and goodwill, Adam Smith is not sentimental in his reading of mankind, or in his counsels. He may be thinking either of poets like the writer of *Night Thoughts*, or of gloomy theologians, when he warns us against the 'whining and melancholy moralists' who are for ever reminding us of the miseries of the world. These, he is sure, are much exaggerated. Comfortable optimism and cool sound sense are oddly mingled in the following very characteristic sentences:

This extreme sympathy with misfortunes we know nothing about seems altogether absurd and unreasonable. Take the whole earth at an average, for one man who suffers pain or misery, you will find twenty in prosperity and joy, or at least in tolerable circumstances. No reason, surely, can be assigned why we should rather weep with the one than rejoice with the twenty. . . . To what purpose should we trouble ourselves about the world in the moon? All men, even those at the greatest distance, are no doubt entitled to our good wishes, and our good wishes we naturally give them. But if, notwithstanding, they should be unfortunate, to give ourselves any anxiety upon that account seems to be no part of our duty. That we should be but little interested, therefore, in the fortune of those whom we can neither serve nor hurt, and who are in every respect so very remote from us, seems wisely ordered by Nature; and if it were possible to alter in this respect the original constitution of our frame, we should gain nothing in exchange.

XI

The *Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, while one of the landmarks in economic thought and full of both philosophic and human interest, belongs at least as much to the history of science as to that of letters. Like the *Decline and Fall* and the speeches of Burke, it marks the great change, here often referred to, in the rational spirit, which had so long been critical and destructive, but which now, the soil having been cleared, proceeded to bear fruit. The seed of Adam Smith's doctrine had been sown early in his mind, at least as regards the tenet of *laissez-faire*. A fragment of his writing, quoted by Dugald Stewart, states that in his Glasgow lectures he had proclaimed this principle; although,

as the biographer says, in a more extreme form than he did afterwards :

> Little else is required to carry a state to the highest degree of affluence from the lowest barbarism but peace, easy taxes, and a tolerable administration of justice ; all the rest being brought about by the natural course of things ;

—that is, without that state regulation of tariffs and prices, which rests upon the fallacy that wealth consists in money. The seed, we know, grew into a far-spreading tree. Smith's treatise is of living interest on many other grounds besides its technical argument and its attack on the mercantile system. It is apt to be diffuse and digressive, but the digressions greatly enrich it. The chapters on education are a small classic in themselves, and the best-written in the book. The passages, again, on the high payment of artists—' the exorbitant rewards of players, opera-singers, opera-dancers, etc.'—and on the mean payment of men of letters, remind us, in their handling of an apparent paradox, of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Of the players Smith remarks :

> It seems absurd at first sight that we should despise their persons, and yet reward their talents with the most profuse liberality. While we do the one, however, we must of necessity do the other. Should the public opinion or prejudice ever alter with regard to such occupations, their pecuniary recompense would quickly diminish.

This was not a true prophecy ; but it shows the author's power, which is sometimes questioned, to recognise other than purely economic forces at play in economic phenomena. Of course, and professedly, Smith isolates as far as he can the problem of wealth from all other social forces ; and his complex argument traces, by a constant blending of deduction and observation, the laws of wealth. One passage, often quoted, gives the groundwork of his belief that the root-instinct of human nature which consists in the ' desire of bettering our condition,' is both inevitable and providential : man, he says,

> is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society, that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good. It is an affectation, indeed, not very common among merchants, and very few words need be employed in dissuading them from it.

Substitute 'natural forces' for the 'invisible hand,' and secularise the argument, and we have something like the creed which Ruskin was abused for assailing.

The *Wealth of Nations* was soon translated into many tongues, including German, Danish, and Italian. It became, like the *Decline and Fall*, a European book. By the edition of 1784, Smith had inserted much new matter of importance, including the pages on the East India Company, whose affairs had long begun to stir the nation. The range of the treatise was thus enlarged; it was already immense. The survey of the colonial question and of American finance had placed the seventh chapter of the fourth book in the company of Burke's American speeches. Adam Smith, although not the 'founder'—because there was no one founder—of political economy as a science, was the first to provide for it a great mass of ordered and verified material, an intelligible guiding principle, and a practical programme. His width of view rises above the detail of his argument. In one of his most impressive pages, he tells us that

> the discovery of America, and that of a passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, are the two greatest and most important events recorded in the history of mankind. . . . What benefits, or what misfortunes to mankind, may hereafter result from those great events, no human wisdom can foresee.

Then he contrasts, with the benefits to Europe, the huge misfortunes that these discoveries have brought to the 'natives both of the East and of the West Indies,' who have suffered 'every sort of injustice'; and he sees no solution, except in the increased strength of the natives, and an 'equality of force,' which may 'inspire mutual fear.' Such an increase will best be brought about by an 'extensive commerce from all countries,' which will lead to more knowledge and 'all sorts of improvements.' More than once, in the *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith rises to visions of this kind, which are still remote.

There is much variety of style, good and otherwise, in the book. The purely scientific portions, especially the analysis of money, are clear writing, but are close, and naturally heavy, technical reading. Smith has not the light hand of Hume in this kind of disquisition, which necessarily forms a large part of his task. As an expositor, he is at his best in such chapters as that on the division of labour, with its classical account of the processes in the making of pins; as a statesman, in his view of the empire; and as a reformer, perhaps in his picture of his southern university.

XII

Dr. David Hartley (1705-1757), the author of *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* (1749), is doubly of note in the history of English thought: and first of all, as a pioneer of what he terms the 'doctrine of mechanism,' which derives mental phenomena from the movements in the brain. These 'vibrations,' with their 'vibratiuncles,' are to Hartley not merely parallel, but causal. Hence he is driven, though unwillingly, into determinism; he denies 'philosophical liberty,' or 'a power of doing different things, the previous circumstances remaining the same'; but he argues that freewill, in the popular and natural sense of 'doing what a person desires or wills to do,' although 'under certain limitations,' is unimpaired. Hartley, secondly, is a pioneer in the theory of the 'association of ideas,' which he does not exactly stake upon the reality of his 'vibrations,' but seeks at every point to connect therewith. He took, as he acknowledges, a suggestion from an earlier *Dissertation* (1731) by a Rev. John Gay[1] on the 'principles of virtue.' Gay had applied the skeleton key of association to ethics, and had explained the apparently intuitive character of compassion, gratitude, and the like by the law of *lost* associations. These feelings once gave us pleasure in themselves, but we forget their origin, and now think only of the objects that evoke them. Hartley works out his calculus at length; his writing is usually bare and not remarkable except for its clearness; but he is a very singular intellectual type. A mechanist and determinist who pleads with ardour for the truth of natural and revealed religion and who speculates freely on the 'second coming' and on the nature and duration of hell is a piquant figure. It is, he is careful to say, 'conjecture only'; but *probably* all governments and churches will be dissolved, the Jews will go back to Palestine, and the world must be destroyed by fire before there can be 'any pure or complete happiness.' The blessed (probably) will enjoy only in a spiritual fashion, but the lost will suffer both in body and in spirit: 'tormentors to men and to one another, deceiving and being deceived, infatuating and being infatuated.' But probably, at last, all mankind may have 'happiness unlimited.' The state between death and the resurrection may well be a 'passive' one, and 'somewhat resembling a dream.' The *Observations* close with a picture of the lewdness and vices of the age. Hartley, when his fancy thus takes a holiday from the rigour of his reasoning, is warmed almost into eloquence, and has

some affinities with eccentrics, presently to be noticed, like Tucker and Monboddo.

Gay is an ancestor of the utilitarians; and another is John Brown[1] (1715-1766), usually known as the 'author of the *Estimate*.' In his *Essay on the 'Characteristics'* of Shaftesbury (1751) he tilts against Clarke and Wollaston; and Brown denounces the formulae of 'conformity with the sense of the sublime and beautiful,' of the 'eternal and immutable relations and differences of things,' and of 'conformity with truth.' (The second of these phrases, as we know, was adapted by the philosopher Square, whose voice had been heard in 1749.) Brown says that all this 'is really no more than ringing changes upon words'; and he propounds instead, as his key-principle, 'the voluntary production of the greatest happiness.' J. S. Mill and other empirical thinkers were to point back with gratitude to this demonstration. Brown then proceeds to refute Mandeville; and at last he returns to Shaftesbury, who had saluted almost every species of 'enthusiasm' except the religious. This last Brown seeks to disparage, carefully discriminating it from the true 'inspiration' which it superficially resembles. 'Melancholy, self-conceit, and ignorance' are the marks of false enthusiasm. In the full history, which has yet to be written, of that explosive word, Brown's analysis would claim a chapter.

This *Essay* is worth far more than Brown's once overrated production, the *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, which made a noise in the year 1757, and which I suppose must be noticed. It is a jeremiad on the growth of 'luxury and effeminacy,' on the badness of education, on the wantonness of dress and high feeding, on the debasement of music by the opera, and on the decay of religion, honour, and public spirit. 'We are rolling,' says Brown, 'to the brink of a precipice that must destroy us.' The increase, above all, of national wealth and trade is deleterious; and all this 'seems to have fitted us for a prey to the insults and invasions of our most powerful enemy,' namely France. Brown, however, is conveniently vague, and brings very few proofs of his charges; and his pompous predictions did not reverberate long.

XIII

> Virtue is of intrinsic value . . . and of indispensable obligation; not a creature of will, but necessary and immutable; of equal extent and antiquity with the divine mind; not a mode of sensation but everlasting truth.

These are truths 'which can appear only by their own light and

which are incapable of proof; otherwise nothing could be proved or known.' Such is the creed of Richard Price (1723-1791), the writer on economics and champion of the two revolutions, American and French. In his *Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals* (1758), Price reverts to Butler, to whom he expresses his debt, and also, in a measure, to Clarke and Cudworth. He is the champion in his day of the strict *a priori* school, and is a practised and telling writer. He is always noted as foreshadowing the ethical views of Kant; and, like all thinkers of his school, Price wins from his tenets a dignity of manner, and even a moral *afflatus*, which are not exactly native to the empirical theory, though found in its votaries. Bentham, great man though he was, did not inspire an *Ode to Duty*. To Price the moral law is its own proof; it is given us by reason, or understanding, which with him is equivalent to intuition. Our motives, in obeying it, are essentially rational, and are none the better for any admixture of passion or emotion. These, indeed, may be the driving power; but 'reason commands,' as well as giving us our primary conceptions of right and wrong. Price in 1778 defended freewill against his friend Joseph Priestley, whose multifarious writings belong chiefly to the next age; and Price's sermon before the Revolution Society kindled to a blaze the flame that burns in the *Reflections*. The next phase in English philosophy, represented by the votaries of 'common sense,' is noticed in another *Survey*. Thomas Reid,[1] the most powerful and important of them, published his *Enquiry into the Human Mind* in 1764, but elaborated it over twenty years later, and was followed by Thomas Brown and others. Reid speaks for the revulsion against the theoretical nihilism of Hume, and works upon British lines; not, like Kant, asking what is implied in the *fact* of experience, but starting with the *facts*, or content, of experience, describing them, and taking them for granted as ultimate. Reid's analysis, on these lines, was of high value within its own frontiers, and he advanced empirical psychology.

XIV

Some books are doomed to be distilled and then forgotten; and such is Abraham Tucker's *Light of Nature Pursued* (1768-1778). It runs to some half a million words, or its lot might have been different. Hazlitt wrote an abridgment, which is itself now lumber; and meanwhile Paley, in his *Moral Philo-*

sophy (1785), had owned his debt to the work, and popularised some of its ruling ideas, while editing out all the whim and fancy. Tucker was a country gentleman with a taste for the classics and a passion for metaphysics, with a queer gift of observation and a fund of fantastic pleasantry. As we read him, the utilitarian formulae become more and more distinct : the ' pig-philosophy,' that Bentham was to methodise and Carlyle to mock at. Good, including moral good, consists first of all in our private pleasure, and next in making others happy ; for to do so makes *us* happy, in the next world if not always in this. The moral sense is not innate, but is based on these calculations of rational self-love. But that original reckoning is not always kept in mind ; and Tucker gives nearly the same turn as Gay to the theory of association, or, as he calls it, ' translation.'

He is an honest reasoner and faces the crucial point fairly. He starts on naturalistic lines and puts off invoking the Day of Judgment as long as he can. Private pleasure and public good *usually* coincide. Yet self-love will never account for the action of Socrates or Regulus, or explain why a man should remain virtuous in extreme old age, on purely mundane grounds. It is too late for him then to be punished in this life :

> Why should he forbear intemperance, when it cannot have time to fill him with diseases ? . . . why should he trouble himself with what becomes of the world, when he is on the point of leaving it ? . . .

The modern naturalist dislikes accepting these consequences, and is for ever trying to bridge the *salto mortale* by idealistic appeals which may not appeal at all. He fears that if he fails he may be driven to a theological conclusion. Probably the fatal gap is in the nature of things, and must be accepted, whatever the consequences, as ultimate. Tucker's survey is not a connected system but a string of discourses. They are cruelly long and run into endless backwaters ; still, they do advance, and in the end they cover many of the vexed questions of ethics and natural theology. The humorous, prosperous Tucker is a piquant mixture of the dreamer and the accountant. He thinks that though pain and evil are real enough, there is a comfortable surplus of happiness in this life. Here is one of the illustrations for which Paley says that Tucker shows an ' unrivalled talent.' If you have a nominal income of £500 a year but pay a tax of four shillings in the pound, is there not a pleasant, clear balance of £400 ? Well, pain and evil are

levied, for good rather than clear reasons, by the chancellor of the universe:

> So if there be a profuse abundance of happiness together with a small mixture of suffering distributed throughout the universe, the condition of the creatures is as valuable as if the net balance of the former had been given alone.

Thus purrs Tucker; and we should like to have heard Voltaire's comment. What would he have said about the 'creatures' whose happiness is *not* 'profuse'? But the official philosophy of the *Light of Nature*, though of much historic interest, is not its most engaging part.

Tucker is a sort of Sterne among the moralists, full of freaks and dreams and fantasies and confessions. He has no more use for the Methodist than he has for the Pope, and he compares the mystical experience of the 'enthusiast' to the 'soothing effect' of the brandy bottle upon the 'young beginner.' Through the drab raiment of the moral preacher there flashes the lining of motley. And there is much quaint, humane, and confidential matter. Mr. Locke had said that desire in its nature is always attended by uneasiness. Tucker knows that this is untrue, and tells of his own happy courtship and marriage, during which he was not uneasy at all. 'Desire, close attended by satisfaction,' directed all his steps, 'nor did it fail of accompanying me to the altar'; and, 'leading delight hand in hand, attended us for many years.' This is pretty enough; it was written after Mrs. Tucker's death; and then, he adds,

> then indeed desire left me, for it had nothing now to rest upon, and with it fled joy, delight, content, and all those under desires that used to put me upon the common actions of the day . . . and though I called in all my philosophy to rescue me from this disconsolate condition, it could not relieve me presently, but had a long struggle before it could get the better of nature.

Tucker has a zoological garden of private heresies that remind us of Sir Thomas Browne's. He believes in the 'corporeity of mental organs,' the 'homogeneity of created spirits,' and last but not least, in the 'plentitude of the universe,' whatever that may mean. I remit the reader to the arguments. But Tucker is best when he quits reality altogether and vamps up old fancies from his odd reading. He takes the soul out of the body into a 'vehicular state,' whither it carries a very small flake of integument, and where it shrinks down into an 'animalcule' and slips about among the corpuscles of matter, which at first

lash it like so many hailstones. It then suffers strange purgations until it is absorbed into the 'mundane soul'; which, nevertheless, is not the universal soul, or primary mind of God, but only a kind of lieutenant-God. In this region he meets the spirits of Locke and Plato, and also of his wife, whom he now calls Eurydice or 'Riddy,' and with whom he talks until 'papa' Locke hurries him away. He has many other tales and quips. He dissects the exact feelings of Eve in presence of 'that accursed pippin.' He tells of the vicar who detected a thief by the magical employment of a cock; and he imagines giants, huge as Hampstead Hill, whose motions are proportionably slow, so that they take half an hour to hear a question put to them. All this, infantile stuff in a sense, seems to belong to another century, and sits oddly on a good utilitarian in 1770. Some passages surely point to a reading of Jeremy Taylor; Tucker, for instance, is preaching upon the vanity of Alexander:

> If Persia be subdued, our hero-errant must seek adventures at the Ganges; if the army mutiny against being carried out of the known world, he must lead them over the Egyptian deserts to force an adoption from Ammonian Jove; if no further conquests remain, he must outbrave the elements, and defy the chilling power of Cydnus to do its worst upon his constitution; if strength of nature, or fortune, kinder than he deserved, carry him safe through this imminent danger too, the young Ammon having nothing left to surpass on earth will needs surpass his brother Bacchus, in the godlike attribute of drinking, so he swallows the grand Herculean cup again and again, until at last he succeeds in washing life away.

Once more, we are faced with the truth that the 'age of reason' is an incorrigible rebel against reason; it is for ever goaded from within to escape from its own prose and logic; and its loudest champions, even Hume himself, are brought up against the region of mystery and hear the call of the imagination and fancy. Yet they are faithful to reason when they seek to define the scientific frontier between the knowable and its opposite.

XV

Another eccentric philosopher who defies classification is the Scottish judge James Burnett, Lord Monboddo (1714-1799). His twelve volumes are seldom opened now: six *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (1763-92), and six on *Antient Metaphysics, or the Science of Universals* (1779-84); a formidable row. As a thinker, Monboddo, in the language of biologists, 'throws back' to the age before Locke; has much

faith in Cudworth; is revolted by Berkeley and Hume, and voluminously controverts them; and, in reply to Hume's nihilism, wonders 'how things could go in the world as they do, supposing all to be a dream, without either mind or body?' He is also remembered for his gleams of prophecy. His interest in primitive races and in defective minds ('Peter, the wild boy') was uncommon in his day; and one figure, that of the Orang Outang, which jumps on the stage at frequent intervals through both his treatises, attracted much derision, and lived a second life in the Sir Oran Haut-Ton of Thomas Love Peacock. Monboddo's monkey, whom, he says, 'men will not allow to be of our species,' is in fact in 'an infantine state of our species,' with the capacity, rather than the 'actual use,' of 'intellect or science.' Still he, or it, has many gifts, including a 'sense of honour': he

> lived several years at Versailles, and died by drinking spirits. He had as much of the understanding of a man as could be expected of his education, and performed many little offices to the lady with whom he lived; but never learned to speak.

And again:

> When he was brought into the company of civilised men, [he] behaved with dignity and composure, altogether unlike a monkey . . . learned not only to do the common offices of a menial servant . . . but also to play the flute.

Monboddo's tastes in literature are classical. The stoutest of Hellenists, he hardly consents to admire any modern writer who does not build his style upon the Greeks or in some way resemble them. Of these Milton is one; and, on reading the lines in *Comus*, 'Hail, foreign wonder,' Monboddo exclaims, justly enough, that 'if Jupiter were to speak English, he would express himself in this manner.' In prose, he prefers, and emulates, the rolling periods of the days before Dryden; and abhors

> the short, smart, unconnected sentences, the *vibrantes sententiolae* as Petronius calls them, of these later writers.

The manner of Sallust and Tacitus, with its *dulcia vitia*, he censures at much length: 'the noble simplicity of the true classical writing rejects all points and turns.' Plain language, woven into elaborate sentences, seems to be Lord Monboddo's ideal; and, as modern exemplars, he mentions Bolingbroke and Atterbury, and (unluckily) also '*Hermes* Harris.' How

much sharp sense is mingled with his paradoxes, may be seen in his panegyric of *Tom Jones* : ' I never saw anything that was so much animated, and as I may say *all alive* with characters and manners.' Fielding, he says elsewhere, has humour as well as wit :

but he has taken care never to mix his wit with his humour. For all the wit in the piece is from himself ; or at least he does not put it into the mouth of his characters of humour.

Monboddo, in the age of Johnson, writes with the leisureliness, and also with the freakishness, of a former day ; and he may be saluted, perhaps, as the very last of his kind. The next phase of English philosophy, after 1780, is represented by Reid, Paley, and Bentham, in whom this element disappears.

CHAPTER XVIII

DIVINITY AND LETTERS

I

It is plain how firmly philosophy kept her gaze fixed, whether as friend or foe, upon theology, and how the two chapters can hardly be separated. Divinity, besides, had her own domain of biblical scholarship, church history, and devotional writing in prose and verse. Each of these fields demands its special student; the reviewer of letters, faced with a mountain of print, can only add his footnote. Happily he finds at least three writers of real power, Butler, Law, and John Wesley; and around them others, of lesser mark, yet more worthy to be read than is always supposed. Among these the deists,[1] who for some decades crowded the arena, may be briefly noticed.

They had opened fire, far back in 1624, in the *De Veritate* of Lord Herbert of Cherbury; but they first began to reach the public mind in the age of Locke. Two of his disciples, John Toland and Anthony Collins, were their chief spokesmen before 1730. Toland's principal work, *Christianity not Mysterious* (1696), is full of sentences that re-echo through the next half-century:

'The use of reason is not so dangerous in religion as is commonly represented.'—'I demand to what end should God require us to believe what we cannot understand?'—'If by knowledge be meant understanding what is believed, then I stand by it, that faith is knowledge.'—'Nor is there any different rule to be found in the interpretation of Scripture from what is common to all other books.'

Revealed religion must be purged of all that revolts reason or the moral sense; and natural religion, which, it was agreed on all hands, is indispensable, will be more firmly based than ever; and the deists, though without system or precision, came to urge with increasing clearness that natural religion was enough. Collins,[2] whose *Discourse of Freethinking* (1713) was ferociously mauled by Swift and Bentley, drew blood by his *Discourse* on the

grounds of Christianity (1724) and his attack on the *Literal Scheme of Prophecy* (1727). In 1730 the dispute was approaching its crisis. Another sixty years, and Burke could say that the 'whole race who called themselves Freethinkers' now 'reposed in lasting oblivion.' Yet the historians of thought have taken account of them. Deism died in England only to live in France, with Voltaire for a transmitter. And, even at home, these writers are the pioneers of the negative criticism of Paine and his fellows. But, as Burke truly says, 'they never acted in corps, or were known as a faction in the state.' They produced no author—nor must we except Bolingbroke—of rare capacity for his task. Often they remind us of Falstaff's 'half a dozen sufficient men'; and if they made so long a fight, with most of the wits, the thinkers, and the divines arrayed against them, it was due rather to the reality of the questions they put than to literary power. We owe, however, Butler's *Analogy*, as well as the *Alciphron*, to the provocation that they gave.

The most popular of their manuals was William Wollaston's *Religion of Nature Delineated* (1724), the sixth edition of which appeared in 1738, and which was read by thousands as well as by Queen Caroline. It is not original and the style is ungainly; but Wollaston is clear and telling, and he was the voice of the more sceptical *intelligentsia* about the year 1730. Like others of his school he rationalises ethics, almost saying that virtue is knowledge and vice absurdity. Pure reason shows us that happiness is 'our being's end and aim'; it infers the difference of good and evil directly from the divine nature; and not only proves the existence of the next world, but tells us not a little about its arrangements. Abstract justice informs us that there

> respect will be had, not only to men's reasoning and virtues, or the contrary; but also to their enjoyment and sufferings here.

All this is expounded with a show of rigour, and with footnotes in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. More stir was caused by an abler pamphlet, *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (1730), by Matthew Tindal (1657-1733), a fellow of All Souls. The sting lay in the second title, 'the Gospel a republication of the religion of nature'; suggesting, what Tindal never fairly avers, that revealed religion adds little or nothing to divine truth. Natural religion is discovered by reasoning, and is thus 'as old as the creation.' It and revelation are 'like two tallies exactly answering one another.' If the Jewish God violates the moral law thus revealed, so much the worse for him. God cannot be resentful or cruel, or command the ascetic to torment himself.

The mass of men have no turn for study or for theology ; and their own reason can quite well guide their steps, for this is eternal, pure, unchangeable, and common to the whole race. Tindal, who calls himself a 'Christian deist,' makes much of Balaam's ass and other marvels, but does not face the question of the crucial miracles. He drew a shower of replies ; but the defence required careful steering ; for the orthodox were forced at once to retain and limit the claims of the natural reason. The argument tended to shift to the ground of practice ; and James Foster, in a tract of 1731, pleads that reason will never reform the world ; and that revelation, supplying as it does more compelling motives, is 'desirable' and 'advantageous.'

The extreme left wing of the group is grotesquely represented by William Woolston [1] (1670-1733), who at first appeared to be a respectable Cambridge B.D., but who in 1727 began to fire off a volley of *Discourses on the Miracles* ; all of which, including the Resurrection, he denies in their literal sense, but retains as spiritual allegories. Woolston is coarse and impudent, but he has some skill in attack ; his pages on the Gadarene swine crudely foreshadow the once famous debate between Huxley and Gladstone. He was tried for blasphemy, was fined, and died in prison. A more striking writer was Thomas Sherlock, afterwards Bishop of London, the son of the controversialist William Sherlock. In 1729 appeared his *Trial of the Witnesses.* They are the 'witnesses' to the Resurrection. The 'trial' is an imaginary one held in the Inns of Court by a party of lawyers, Mr. A. holding the brief for Woolston, and Mr. B. for the apostles, who are 'accused of giving false evidence.' Either this evidence was forged and inadequate, or there was fraud in the 'transaction' itself. The question is discussed in a spirit of cool legal haggling ; and after the summing-up the jury find for the apostles. It is strange to think that the writer, who has as little imagination and almost as little reverence as his opponents, was a pillar of the church.

One of the most acute and readable of the deists is Thomas Chubb [2] (1679-1747), the tallow-chandler, who was admired by Pope as a 'wonderful phenomenon of Wiltshire.' Chubb, who professes no learning, sets out to edit the Bible by the light of reason and mother-wit. For 'the ploughman, the thresher, the illiterate tradesman,' he says, 'common sense' and 'common honesty' will serve. The tenets that result are simple. Accept the 'eternal rules of right and wrong' ; repent of your sins, and help your fellows ; and know that you will be judged

hereafter by your deeds. God cares for his 'intelligent creatures,' and

> becomes a party in their cause, and is interested in their weal or woe; and will return the kindness, and resent the injury, done to those intelligent creatures, as if they were done to himself.

Chubb makes a tolerably clean sweep of the rest of the creeds; refuses to worship a 'triangular God'; holds that Christ, who was only divine in the same sense as Moses, 'used lofty and figurative language' suited to his times; that there is 'no authority lodged' in the apostles; and that the divine character is 'sullied' by many of the actions of the Jewish deity. Little in all this was new; but Chubb, as Sir Leslie Stephen remarks, was 'led through the whole circle of deist argument.' He measures the extent to which the heresy had struck downwards in society, and the impatience of the people with the compromises of the learned; and he cuts eagerly at every knot with his sharpened saw. His final views are seen in a posthumous collection, the *Author's Farewell.* There is something piquant about Chubb. In the *Farewell* he begs his readers to take as his 'last and dying thoughts' what he now writes, and not what are offered as such 'by others when I am dead; even though grounded, or pretended to be grounded, on what I may be represented to have said on a sick bed.' And we hear that in his last hours he 'entertained no disagreeable apprehensions of futurity.'

II

Some writers should also be mentioned who remained in the field even after the appearance of the *Analogy* (1736). The first is Henry Dodwell[1] the younger, whose *Christianity not Founded on Argument* (1742) may be said to point the way to a new kind of scepticism. Sometimes called a deist, Dodwell does not openly uphold natural religion, but seems to tell all parties that the ground sinks under them. He attacks miracles; but his real tenor is to disparage reason itself. He speaks of the bewildering disputes of divines, which plain men can never follow; and of the importance of reason to make men good, much more to teach them to be martyrs. But what resource, then, is left? One is scepticism, and this is probably Dodwell's choice. The other is the 'living witness and uncorrupt commentator in our own breasts'; the 'inner light' and 'law in our hearts'; nay, a 'constant and particular

revelation imparted separately and supernaturally to every individual.' Dodwell boldly ends with the text, 'My son, trust thou in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding.' When he wrote, the Wesleyan evangel was flying over the land; but John Wesley was not deceived, and denounced the work as an oblique attack upon the faith. There were many other rejoinders.[1] Dodwell shows his hand in a sentence which well exemplifies his mode of irony, and in which the eyes are seen peering through the mask:

> Be satisfied henceforth that there is a kind of evidence, of power beyond what reason can ever pretend to furnish, such as brings with it that cordial peace and assurance of mind to which all conviction by human means is an utter stranger: such as you see can enable your pious Mother, without any of the reputed advantages of academic institution, to pronounce with so much peremptory justice on all religious causes, and reprove, with so good a grace, all the well-glossed heresies of a lettered *Clarke*.[2]

Between 1739 and 1745 another belated deist, Peter Annet [3] (1693-1769), poured forth a series of tracts which are marked by a rough and even brutal energy. Some are replies to Sherlock, others are criticisms on St. Paul; but the most venturous, *Social Bliss Considered*, is an attack on the conventional view of marriage. Annet, while condemning seduction and adultery, frankly pleads for the oldest profession in the world. If neither party, and no third party, is hurt, the natural desires of youth, he says, may well find their outlet with the aid of 'an obliging courtesan.' The deists had seldom given such a handle to their enemies, and indeed are usually moral in their tone. But it was not for these opinions that Annet shared the fate of Woolston. In 1761, in a print called the *Free Inquirer*, he rationalised the Old Testament miracles in a vulgar and humorous style, comparing them to the tales in *Don Quixote* and *Gulliver*. Joseph, we hear, invented his dream. The firstborn of Egypt were murdered by the Jews; and 'the tenderness of the princess ignorantly nourished a viper destined to gnaw the vitals of Egypt.' Thus was 'villany consecrated with the name of the Most High.' These sallies were judged to be excessive; and Annet was fined, and for a long time lay in prison. At last he was released, and kept school. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1762-3 there is a singular dispute over his fate: one contributor pleading Annet's good life in his favour; a second replying that 'the better an infidel is,' the better he will 'propagate the doctrines of damnation'; and a

third suggesting that the second writer was merely a ' masked buffoon ' attacking the Church.

Before this debate faded away there was a certain epilogue, which can be studied in two very different works. In 1754-5 John Leland produced his *View of the Principal Deistical Writers*, who are described, from the orthodox point of view, at laborious length and with abundance of dates and titles. Leland is a dull fellow and a heavy writer, but his work serves literary history well. He is by far the best contemporary authority on the subject. In his second volume he takes in hand Hume and Bolingbroke ; and the issue of Bolingbroke's works in 1754 by David Mallet marks the finale.

One half of these five volumes is concerned with theology. The main contents are the letters written, about the year 1720, to Pouilly ; the *Letters and Essays* written to Pope ; and the *Fragments or Minutes of Essays*, thrown together at Pope's request, and described as embodying conversations between the friends. There are many suggestions that we can trace in the *Essay on Man*.[1] Pope no doubt drew on wider sources, on Leibniz and Shaftesbury ; but they often filtered through the mind of Bolingbroke. The *Essay* is much easier to read than Bolingbroke's lucubrations, which are full of ignorance and incoherence. He talks of the ' lofty madness of Plato and the pompous jargon of Aristotle,' states that Spinoza ' acknowledged but one substance, *and that Matter* ' ; and serves up what he supposes to be the ideas of Locke and Bacon. He has little of his own to say. He puts into glossy form the old hard-worked arguments against the God of Moses and the God (whom he dislikes only less) of Paul. These, we are told, are not the ' amiable being ' disclosed by natural religion. But Bolingbroke's natural religion comes to little. He has, indeed, flashes of Voltairian wit. He draws a telling picture of an Egyptian priest puzzled by the sight of the Christian ritual. He also explains why that ritual is more disturbing to a well-balanced mind than it ought to be : for we are ' imposed on,' he says, while we are *there*, by the ' solemn magnificence of a church, the grave and moving harmony of music,' even if we feel little either before or afterwards. Nothing can better show the deep secularity of the wits than the parallel which Bolingbroke suggests to Pope :

> You and I knew Betterton and Mrs. Barry off the stage as well as on it ; and yet I am persuaded neither of us could ever see Jaffier and Belvidera without terror and compassion.

III

These writers, who had the popular ear, but who had never been comprehensively answered, were in the mind of Butler when composing his *Analogy*. His works are sometimes said not to be literature ; but that is like saying that the temple of Karnak is not art. Joseph Butler [1] (1692-1752) preached his *Fifteen Sermons* (1726) in the Rolls Chapel ; lived long in a retired Yorkshire parsonage ; published the *Analogy* in 1736 ; was favoured and unearthed, as already noted, by Queen Caroline ; became Bishop of Bristol, and died Bishop of Durham. There is no classic shapeliness, or ' Gothic ' freedom either, in his works, or in their language. But there is power everywhere : a massive symmetry in the plan, of which all the lines converge to a single purpose, and a wonderful, if ungainly, economy of words. The *Sermons* are a landmark in ethical thought. The *Analogy*, though aimed at opponents who have long since disappeared, is a living book. Butler has a peculiar view of man and of his destiny, which must impress a reader of any creed. I must not affect to do justice to his argument, but will try to give some notion of his temper.

At first sight, in his austerity and depth, he seems an alien in the age of Pope and the Walpoles. But he belongs to it intellectually ; for he is rational to the core. There is nothing mystical or transcendental in his conviction that our reason is limited and that a boundless unknown element surrounds the human scene. He does not think that some flash of intuition would carry us further into it, but only that our reason cannot do so. Reason is our supreme guide, and revelation depends on reason for its proofs. Even if reason told us more about nature, it does not follow that we should be wiser or happier. Not, for instance, if we could understand the entire physical universe :

> What are the laws by which matter acts upon matter, but certain effects ; which some, having observed to be frequently repeated, have reduced to general rules ? The real nature and essence of beings likewise is what we are altogether ignorant of. All these things are so entirely out of our reach, that we have not the least glimpse of them. And we know little more of ourselves, than we do of the world about us. . . . And what if we were acquainted with the whole creation, in the same way and as thoroughly as we are with any single object in it ? What would all this natural knowledge amount to ?

Such is our ignorance : ' we know not at all upon what our

existence and our living powers depend.' Still, within us there is something fixed and stable for our guidance. Each of us is himself—a 'living agent,' or subject, with a continuous identity, of which our consciousness is only the witness, but not the essence. And if we look within, we see that our nature is a complex system, or hierarchy, of faculties, instincts, and passions. That system is partly steered by self-love; and self-love in itself is neither a vice nor a virtue but a fact. We inevitably refer everything, in a general sense, to ourselves. But we also have passions, which all have self-love behind them, but which stand in varying relations to our moral good. For they are all directed outward, upon *things*, or objects; and not, as the Hobbist says, upon the attainment of pleasure; although, no doubt, when they are satisfied pleasure (or it may be pain) supervenes. The passions are sometimes wholly good, sometimes bad, sometimes mixed and variable according to their direction. The value of each, in each instance of its operation, is decided by a principle that rules the whole system *de jure*: the principle of conscience, or, as it was long afterwards to be called, the practical reason. Conscience, Butler seems to say, decides at once, and without explaining itself, and without appeal. What its actual findings are in difficult cases, he is hardly concerned to state. His aim is to lay out a foundation for moral psychology; and the masonry, so far as it goes, is as hard as basalt. His analyses of compassion, and of 'resentment,' are classical. Resentment, or 'deliberate anger,' can be 'not only innocent, but a generous movement of mind'; it 'stands in our nature for self-defence'; it is a 'weapon, put into our hands by nature, against injury, injustice, and cruelty'; it is 'one of the common bonds, by which society is held together.' This sound and manly code, it may be added, is a safeguard against our pitying the wrong people, or ourselves upon the wrong occasions. The chief thing that we miss in Butler's ethics is the historical sense. He is always thinking of man, civilised man, as he is, and it does not occur to him to ask how the ideas of conscience and justice grew up.

IV

Butler's habit is to begin, not with *a priori* principles, but with familiar facts, and to ask us to see what they imply. Hence he can avoid the extremes both of fanaticism and of sentiment. His conception of 'conscience' is partly suggested by that of the 'moral sense,' which Shaftesbury had extolled in more

emotional language and Hutcheson had raised into an independent faculty. Butler strips off the sentiment, links conscience with the whole scheme of the mind, and deepens the analysis. The one thing, he says, which 'is of consequence to mankind or any creature,' and which mankind can 'in strictness of speaking be said to have right to,' is happiness. But happiness can only be won upon this earth 'to a certain degree,' and only by obeying the voice of the rational conscience. Your impulse to love and benefit your neighbour is satisfied at once by being spent upon its object. You can win happiness, and also a peculiar sort of serenity, by 'working for the good and happiness of the world,' but not by indulging bad feelings, which are 'mere misery.' 'The satisfaction arising from the indulgence of them is little more than a relief from that misery.' But we need not show charity in the wrong quarter, or be tender to vermin. Butler justifies public executions, in cases where the life of the offender is 'inconsistent with the quiet and happiness of the world.' And in all these counsels he says there is nothing 'enthusiastical or unreasonable'; and in his aversion to 'enthusiasm,' by which he means religious excitement, or a pretended immediate revelation, is as truly a man of his time as Hume. He told John Wesley that any claim to possess the special gifts of the Spirit was 'a horrid thing, Sir, a very horrid thing.'

Butler's reasoning is packed as close as the provision for an Arctic voyage, and can hardly be condensed further. His theological inferences are naturally not separate, in his own mind, from his view of human nature. For instance, any divergence between the calls of self-love and those of virtue is seen to vanish when we think that 'all shall be set right at the final distribution of things.' This analysis of our moral constitution is built into the *Analogy*, and is repeated, with certain changes, in the suffixed essay *Of the Nature of Virtue*. In his great work, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, Butler is facing different adversaries. He is no longer concerned to refute the egoistic theory which had come down from Hobbes. His aim is now to hunt the deists into a corner where they must choose between revealed religion and atheism. Other writers, more rhetorically, had attempted the same thing; but the deist had always slipped through. There were many brands of deist; but Butler, in general, means the man who holds that the presence of a divine author and ruler is duly established by the light of reason, but who is loth to believe more than that, and who

attacks or pares away the Christian scheme of revelation on the ground of many 'objections.' Butler drives him to admit that these objections tell equally against the 'religion of nature.' To this end he builds up one of the most intricate and crushing arguments in the language. Yet Butler, here again, appeals to us less by his actual reasonings, than by the exemplary rigour of his method, and by the peculiar vision of the world that he imposes upon us. He is the most English of all great moralists, in his unflinching regard for the phenomena, and in his habit of testing every footstep as he proceeds; and he is perhaps the greatest of all English moralists who are not also poets.

This world, he says, is a 'foreign country,' where we are placed in a state of discipline. Simply to pursue pleasure and mirth 'will appear the most romantic scheme of life that ever entered into thought.' There is no room in Butler's scheme of things for my Lord Foppington, or for Roderick Random. Aided by reason and conscience, we have to steer in a world of probabilities; for 'probability is the guide of life,' and is also our guide when we think of the life to come. That is, not simply *our* guide, for we are sufficiently convinced by the scriptures of future rewards and penalties; but, says Butler, painfully inserting himself into the skin of the deist, it must be, it had much better be, *your* guide. For even if the probability were a low one, it would be safer to act as if it were a certainty. Not much harm can be done if there is nothing in it; but if you turn out to have neglected the truth, think of the consequences. Such is the turn given to Pascal's famous theme of the wager, of which Butler may well have heard. This is only one instance of his dialectic. He follows a similar method throughout. His commonest phrases are 'for aught we can say,' 'it cannot therefore be called incredible,' and the like. But we misread the *Analogy* if we forget that Butler believes far more than he is asking his adversary to concede. He goes on, of course, to expand the 'positive evidence' for revealed religion; but this part of the work, though it shows his usual power, and indeed is written with more ease and eloquence than the rest, is less original in matter.

V

Butler's style often suggests that of Aristotle: it is close, often tormented and awkward, with endless parentheses and qualified qualifications and clauses that are thought out as they proceed. His very punctuation, his sentences arrested by

many commas, reflect this habit of mind. But a style it is, though it may be pilloried by the rhetorician or the lover of the graces. It leaves its dint on the memory. We accompany a strong, grim, anxious intellect through every step in its own processes. To read certain chapters in the *Analogy* or the three sermons *On Human Nature* is to listen to no derivative preacher. We are with a man who makes it a point of conscience to see that 'things are what they are,' and who is full of repressed power. Sometimes he breaks out, and then the words flow easier. The following passage shows this quality as well as Butler's unconventional habit of mind :

> And it is not impossible, that, amidst the infinite disorders of the world, there may be exceptions to the happiness of virtue ; even with regard to those persons, whose course of life from their youth up, has been blameless ; and more with regard to those, who have gone on for some time in the ways of vice, and have afterwards reformed. For suppose an instance of the latter case : a person with his passions inflamed, his natural faculty of self-government impaired by self-indulgence, and with all his vices about him, like so many harpies, craving for their accustomed gratification ; who can say how long it might be, before such a person would find more satisfaction in the reasonableness and present good consequences of virtue, than difficulties and self-denial in the restraints of it ; experience also shows, that men can, to a great degree, get over their sense of shame, so as that by professing themselves to be without principle, and avowing even direct villany, they can support themselves against the infamy of it.

Butler's moral and intellectual passion is of the dammed-up sort, and we feel the weight of the waters behind. His phrases often have the turn of the *pensée*, and its finality. He has been describing the misery involved in the feelings of rage and envy, and adds that when we bear ill-will to anyone 'the whole man appears monstrous, without anything right or human in him.' Again, he exclaims, with his note of passion, that 'immoderate self-love does very little consult its own interest.' In his two sermons on 'compassion,' which contain one of his finest pieces of analysis, he is not sentimental. When Butler comes to the criminal, he defends the punishment of death, saying that 'his life is inconsistent with the quiet and happiness of the world.' And in the sermon on the 'ignorance of man' (which provides the motto on our title-page) he observes, in partial disagreement here with Aristotle, that 'knowledge is not our proper happiness.' The reasonings in the first part of the *Analogy* all lead to the conclusion that the difficulties to be found in revelation

have their parallels in the natural order; and that the deist, therefore, for whom this order is divine, is not entitled to demur to revelation. Critic after critic has noted how such a plea has no force against those who deny that the natural order is divine; and how the sceptic may be advantaged by Butler's frank admissions that earthly justice is most imperfect. But all this only shows his strength in another direction. He is not, like so many later thinkers, harassed by any such consequences. He is not concerned to show that this life is always equitable, either to good men or to bad; nor is he driven, like many a modern 'naturalist,' to accept as inevitable and insoluble a disharmony in the scheme of things. But his concessions add much force to his statement of the *normal* law by which 'we still have judgment here':

> And by prudence and care, we may, for the most part, pass our days in tolerable ease and quiet; or, on the contrary, we may, by rashness, ungoverned passion, wilfulness, or even by negligence, make ourselves as miserable as ever we please. And many do please to make themselves extremely miserable; *i.e.* to do what they know beforehand will render them so. They follow those ways, the fruit of which they know, by instruction, example, experience, will be disgrace, and poverty, and sickness, and untimely death. This every one observes to be the general course of things; though it is to be allowed, we cannot find by experience, that all our sufferings are owing to our own follies.

And, a little later:

> The constitution of Nature is such, that delay of punishment is no sort nor degree of presumption of final impunity.

Thus he starts from what is common ground; and though a devout spirit breathes in every page, and though he keeps his reader firmly fixed on the application of his argument, we can still, in a measure, disengage his picture of life and humanity from its theological bearings, and treat him as we might a pagan moralist like Aristotle. We then see how firm is Butler's footing, and feel we are in presence of a free mind and of a great observer, who had a keen perception of the ethical *make-up* of mankind, and of the strains and stresses at play within it.

His fifth chapter, 'on a state of probation,' is a case in point. Much of what he says of life as a scene of discipline is equally true whether there be another life or not, and even if the discipline has to be its own reward. His classical analysis of the formation of habit is sown with sayings that are charged

with experience ; and one of these will appeal to every physician or aider of his fellows :

> Perception of distress in others is a natural excitement, passively to pity, and actively to relieve it ; but let a man set himself to attend to, inquire out, and relieve distressed persons, and he cannot but grow less and less sensibly affected with the various miseries of life with which he must become acquainted ; when yet, at the same time, benevolence, considered not as passion, but as a practical principle of action, will strengthen ; and whilst he passively compassionates the distressed less, he will acquire a greater aptitude actively to assist and befriend them.

Butler's subtlety as a watcher of character is nowhere better seen than in his sermon on ' self-deceit.' Few preachers would have chosen for such a theme the text of Nathan's words to David, ' Thou art the man.' Butler fixes at once on the ' prodigious ' feature in the story as it is told. David hears the parable of the lamb ; and yet

> he had been guilty of much greater inhumanity, with the utmost deliberation, thought, and contrivance. Near a year must have passed, between the commission of his crimes, and the time of the prophet's coming to him ; and it does not appear from the story that he had in all this while the least remorse or contrition.

Butler cannot get over this Oriental phenomenon ; he returns to it, and frankly gives it up. The *Sermons*, we see, are more flowingly and freely written than the *Analogy*, and the feeling is less restrained :

> It is really prodigious, to see a man, before so remarkable for virtue and piety, going on deliberately from adultery to murder, with the same cool contrivance, and from what appears, with as little disturbance, as a man would endeavour to prevent the ill consequences of a mistake he had made in any common matter. That total insensibility of mind with respect to those horrid crimes, after the commission of them, shows that he did in some way or other delude himself ; and this could not be with respect to the crimes themselves, which were manifestly of the grossest kind. What the particular circumstances were with which he extenuated them, and quieted and deceived himself, is not related.

This, no doubt, is partly an answer to one of the stock deistical objections to the morality of the Hebrew books. But Butler also turns the text into a discourse on the mysteries of self-deception. Like Law, though without all his satiric sallies, he draws various ' characters ' at some length. There are the men

who know that they are 'never in the wrong,' and are 'too far gone to have anything said to them'; the self-interested men, who can only see what is urged in favour of themselves ('the least, the most minute thing'); and lastly those who suffer from a comprehensive 'ignorance of themselves.' Self-deceit, on the whole, is to be traced to 'a general want of diffidence and distrust concerning our own character.' And at last a cure is shrewdly proposed. You should consider, 'if an enemy were to set about defaming you, what part of your character would he single out?' You will know at once, if you try; and you will probably see, whether you are 'guilty or innocent in that respect.' Still, the risk remains:

> And if people will be wicked, they had better of the two be so from the common vicious passions without such refinements, than from this deep and calm source of delusion.

It is told of Butler that he was fond of walking in his garden in the dark, and of thinking aloud to his chaplain; who dutifully said the right things in reply, and who reports one of his reflections. We must imagine the long silences, and the listening disciple:

> What security is there against the insanity of individuals? The physicians know of none; and as to divines, we have no data either from Scripture or from reason, to go upon relative to this affair. . . . Why might not whole communities and public bodies be seized with fits of insanity, as well as individuals? . . . Nothing but this principle, that they are liable to insanity, equally at least with private persons, can account for the major part of those transactions of which we read in history.

This is like Swift; and we remember that the writer had seen the court of George the Second, and the South Sea bubble, and the venality of Walpole's rule; and that the *Vanity of Human Wishes* came out three years before his death. Now and again, above the skits and satires and mundane writing of the time, we hear this note of melancholy and gravity, like a great gun booming through a display of fireworks. Butler, wth his deep speculative background, is mentally further from the social scene than either Swift or Johnson. His gift for pure metaphysics is very definite, although they were not his main affair. His youthful discussions with Samuel Clarke on the unity of God show his natural bent for the abstrusest reasoning; and the dissertation on *Personal Identity*, attached to the *Analogy*, is the keystone of his argument.

VI

By the middle of the century the whole complexion of the debate[1] was changing. The scattered attacks of the deists had little scholarship behind them. The absence of the unborn historical sense had left the debate unfruitful; and moreover the real question had scarcely emerged. By what test were the Christian evidences to be judged? It was no longer sufficient to reply, By the test of reason. The issue was now, What are the judicial methods that reason approves, and whither do they lead? Are they the same for sacred and for profane history? The case was stated, in a far-reaching fashion, by Hume. But another answer, by a lesser writer, and on a more specific issue, yet with implications almost as destructive as Hume's, came from within the fold. Conyers Middleton[2] (1683-1750), a divine who a century later might have been described as 'very broad,' was regarded by the stricter churchmen, and also by John Wesley, as a snake in the grass. Professing to strike at the Papist, he was in fact, so it was said, striking, in spite of all his disavowals, at the Gospels themselves:

> The whole tenor of your argument tends to prove . . . that no miracles were wrought by Christ or His apostles . . . and that these, too, were knaves, or fools, or both.

So wrote the impetuous Wesley;[3] and Middleton's *Free Inquiry*, which came out in 1748, in the same year as Hume's *Essay on Miracles*, seemed to set up a canon which it was difficult to reject and impossible to tolerate. Middleton was a strange mixture of courage and evasiveness; he cannot be thought to have been quite ingenuous; but he was much more than a capable, disconcerting, and rather slippery disputant. His book affected the evolution of opinion. Many of his inferences are antiquated; his elegances of style are somewhat dulled; but he is an efficient, a trained, and a finished writer, not unworthy of the praise of Gibbon.[4]

Middleton's venomous local dispute with Bentley, the Master of Trinity, may be passed over. His first work of note, justly styled 'agreeable' by Gibbon, was *A Letter from Rome* (1729), designed to prove the 'exact conformity between Popery and paganism,' and the derivation of the 'religion of the present Romans' from that of their 'heathen ancestors.' The incense and holy water, the lamps in the temples and images by the wayside, had their classic originals. The 'conformity' in

question Middleton imputes to the cunning of the priests, and not to a natural and historical process. His treatment is thus only half-critical, though his facts were often undeniable. Next, in a *Letter to Dr. Waterland* (1731), he declared that the scriptures were 'not of absolute and universal inspiration,' leaving it in doubt whether any *given* passage was inspired; and in another tract he reduced the Creation and the Fall to moral parables. In 1741 Middleton published his *Life of Cicero*, long esteemed a classic. But in 1747 he launched an *Introductory Discourse* to his chief work, the *Free Inquiry* (1748); the topic of which was the 'miraculous powers which are supposed to have existed in the Christian church through several successive ages.' Later, he issued various replies to critics.

In one of these he states the gist of his argument:

> The difficulty, then, about fixing the aera of the miraculous powers continues still in its full force, as a sort of presumptive argument against the reality of any such powers after the days of the Apostles.

And he had said more strongly, in the *Introductory Discourse*,

> We admit no miracles but those of the Scriptures. . . . All the rest are either justly suspected, or certainly forged.

Gibbon, with due compliments, condenses the whole position into one ironical page in his fifteenth chapter. But it is clear that he pushes it to the conclusion, at the expense of the Gospels themselves, which Middleton disclaims. The *Free Inquiry* becomes perfunctory when it has to be explained why the central miracles are exempted from corrosion. It is no wonder that the writer was considered to be a furtive enemy of the faith. From a modern standpoint, his real weakness is that of his time. All the post-apostolic marvels are set down to imposture or to credulity; by which is understood something wholly unexplained. For Middleton, the tales of curing the sick, raising the dead, and casting out the devil were contrived by churchmen in order to govern 'with more ease the unruly spirit of the populace.' But he has been rightly praised for his sense, rare in his day, of the continuity of history. It is curious that while he had little perception of the innocent processes that may beget a legend or belief, he has a very keen sense of the fashion in which it may fade away, not owing to argument, but through a change of mental habit. One passage will show the dignity of thought and language to which he can rise. Wesley had objected that if the patristic miracles, so well vouched for,

were to go, then 'farewell the credit of all history, not only sacred but profane'; and the reply runs:

There is not in all history any one miraculous fact, so authentically attested as the existence of witches.[1] All Christian nations whatsoever have consented in the belief of them and provided capital laws against them; in consequence of which, many hundreds of both sexes have suffered a cruel death. In our own country great numbers have been condemned to die at different times, after a public trial, by the most eminent judges of the kingdom; and in some places, for a perpetual memorial of their diabolical practices, anniversary sermons and solemnities have been piously instituted, and subsist at this day, to propagate a detestation of them to all posterity. Now, to deny the reality of facts so solemnly attested, and so universally believed, seems to give the lie to the sense and experience of all Christendom; to the wisest and best of every nation, to public monuments subsisting to our own times; yet the incredibility of the thing prevailed, and was found at last too strong for all this force of human testimony; so that the belief of witches is now [1749] utterly extinct, and quietly buried, without involving history in its ruin, or leaving the least disgrace, or censure, upon it.

VII

Middleton's repute as a writer rested greatly upon his *History of the Life of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, which appeared in 1741 in two stately tomes with engravings by Gravelot. No one will now go the length of Samuel Parr,[2] who in his high-pitched Latin praised the purity and suavity of the style, adding that we must go to Addison for the like of such flowing and sonorous rhythm. Indeed there is little savour, or race, in Middleton's language; and this, as well as some flatness of rhythm, was the danger of the 'middle style' when past its best. Still, it was, says Middleton himself, 'Cicero who instructed me to write'; and, although he does not Latinise to excess, his best pages are like a good translation from Cicero. One, relating to the passion for glory, is really in the antique mood and shows that the writer was a belated son of the Renaissance:

It will not seem strange, to observe the wisest of the ancients pushing this principle to so great a length, and considering glory as the amplest reward of a well-spent life; when we reflect, that the greatest part of them had no notion of any other reward or futurity; and even those, who believed a state of happiness to the good [*sic*], yet entertained it with so much diffidence, that they indulged it rather as a wish, than a well-grounded hope; and were glad, therefore, to lay hold on that, which seemed to be within their reach, a

futurity of their own creating: an immortality of fame and glory from the applause of posterity. This, by a pleasing fiction, they looked upon as a propagation of life, and an eternity of existence; and had no small comfort in imagining, that though the sense of it should not reach to themselves, it would extend at least to others; and that they should be doing good still when dead, by leaving the examples of their virtues to the imitation of mankind. Thus Cicero, as he often declares, never looked upon that to be his life, which was confined to this narrow circle of earth, but considered his acts, as seeds sown in the immense field of the universe, to raise up the fruit of glory and immortality to him through a succession of infinite ages. Nor has he been frustrated of his hope, or disappointed of his end; but as long as the name of Rome subsists, or as long as learning, virtue, and liberty preserve any credit in the world, he will be great and glorious in the memory of all posterity.

The *Life*, though long out of date, is a deftly told and well-proportioned story, with countless extracts from Cicero interwoven in English. It would have saved Middleton some loss of credit had he owned his debts to a forgotten ponderous tome of Stuart days, William Bellenden's *De Tribus Luminibus Romanorum* (1633), of which very few copies were extant. Cicero is one of the *lumina* (the others are not identified); and to him Bellenden devotes some eight hundred pages, without, however, reaching his death. The extracts from the orator are arranged so as to suggest a continuous chronicle of Rome. Middleton duly read his Cicero, and other authorities ancient and modern; but he seems to have helped himself freely to Bellenden; and Parr describes, almost with tears, the results of a comparison. Still, in one sense Middleton was the first in the field.[1] The histories of Hume and Robertson were still to come; and here was the natural, elegant style, inherited from the time of Anne, and used for a full-dress biography with a historical setting.

VIII

Middleton's friend William Warburton[2] (1698-1779) cast so long a shadow in his day, and is now himself such a shadow, that his interest, though real, is principally historical. He knew much, and wrote immensely; he was the friend, the monitor, and the editor of Pope; he was feared as a verbal pugilist, and swashed his way through his age with a thick-skinned courage, assailing Bolingbroke, Crousaz, Wesley, Lowth, and many a clerical brother besides. In the end he became the aged Bishop of Gloucester, the type and phantom

of a fighting divine of former times. His works were still to be reprinted, though most of them are to-day lumber except for the student; and few modern writers have a good word for him. His *Divine Legation of Moses* is always mentioned, but as a curiosity.

Yet Warburton was a man of much general force of mind. Bred to the law, he probably mistook his calling when he commenced divine. He might have been a great advocate, always convinced of his brief, but never a great judge. His intellect was of the kind that moves with confidence and clear logic from calmly assumed principles to preconceived conclusions. Perhaps his most effective work is his earliest, the *Alliance between Church and State* (1736). Its drift is given by the second title, 'the necessity and equity of an established religion and a test law, demonstrated.' Much of the argument is presumably obsolete. The English church, says Warburton, steers a middle course between Rome and 'Malmesbury.' By Malmesbury is meant Mr. Hobbes and 'atheism.' Equally it shuns the perils of 'enthusiasm.' So far there was nothing new. But Warburton starts, like Hobbes himself, with the notion of a 'state of nature' ruled by brutish force and self-regard. Out of this, society frees itself by a compact, in which the church (as it was not with Hobbes) is an independent party. The magistrate and religion strike a bargain. *He* looks after the rights and the persons of the subjects, prescribes earthly sanctions, and protects the church. *She* cares for their souls and morals and teaches of sanctions after death. But there is also a certain interchange of functions; for the magistrate punishes atheism and heresies that threaten the peace, while the church has some powers of civil discipline. From these are deduced her institutions, with the machinery of the spiritual courts. There is to be toleration up to a point. The dissenter must have no political rights; if he were eligible for office the true sheep might be outnumbered and the bargain upset:

> In a word, a national religion with a test law is the universal voice of nature; the most savage nations have employed it to civilise their manners; and the politest know no other way to prevent their return to barbarity and violence.

Should I seem to have put these reasonings too bluntly, it will be enough to turn to the book itself. This is how two Whiggish and Erastian opponents are handled:

> In earnest, I do not know a great insult ever put on the under-

standings of men than by these two writers ; while it was presumed that the gloom of equivocation, which spreads itself through the formal *chapters* of the one, and the glare of puerile declamation, that tinsels the trite *essays* of the other, could hide their true end from the observation of those whose destruction they were conspiring. For as Tully says of the two assassin gladiators, *par est improbitas, eadem impudentia, gemina audacio.* . . .

I have said thus much of the *Alliance* in order to speak more briefly of that mastodon among treatises, the *Divine Legation* (1737-41).

Warburton takes his time before reaching Moses. In his first three books he argues that morality and society require the belief in a future state : a tenet which the church has in her charge. In the fourth he comes to the Jews, whom he lectures with boundless arrogance. His main paradox may be quickly described. A favourite objection of the deist had been that the chosen people showed little or no sign of holding the belief in question. This, says Warburton, is true ; but it is just what proves the Mosaic dispensation and polity to *be* divine ; such, in fact, was the 'legation of Moses.' And why ? Because the Jews *were* a chosen people ; because they, and they alone, being supported by an 'extraordinary providence,' were duly punished and rewarded in the life on earth. But from the time of the kings down to the Captivity this special providence 'kept gradually decaying, till on their [the Jews'] final re-establishment it entirely ceased.' In proof, Warburton goes through the history point by point, to show that, like Macbeth, they 'still had judgment here.' He need not be followed on his wilful course. The book, with its load of learning and its want of historical or philosophical sense, is a relic of the pre-critical age. We can admire its formal construction. The syllogisms are set out with dogmatic clearness ; the asides, though very long, fall into their places ; and the whole is a fairly symmetrical piece of carpentry, made up of monstrous blocks.

It is of interest for its digressions and for stray passages. Gibbon, who calls it a 'monument, already crumbling in the dust, of the vigour and weakness of the human mind,' praises the 'learning, imagination and discernment' of certain 'episodes' on Greek philosophy and Egyptian hieroglyphics—episodes long since buried. Another paradox, however, Gibbon refuted with scorn : namely that Virgil, in the sixth Ænid, described the initiation of the hero into the Eleusinian mysteries. Equally extinct are *Julian* (1750), also derided by Gibbon ; the very

insolent attack on Hume's *History of Natural Religion*, and another, on Lowth, whose reply is a model of grave good temper. *The Doctrine of Grace* (1762) is a furious but more effective assault on Wesley, in which the morbid phenomena of the meetings recorded in the *Journal* are condemned. Warburton's relations with Pope have often been related : how he defended the poet's orthodoxy against Crousaz, advised him as to the *Dunciad* in its later form, inserting notes of his own ; and how he inherited the copyright of Pope's works, and edited them. His own edition of Shakespeare (1747) has earned little praise. But all this concerns the history of books rather than of literature.

Warburton is an ungracious figure ; but we look, not in vain, for some reconciling traits. Some are supplied by his editor and worshipper, Richard Hurd, who has been named with due honours as a critic (Ch. XVI.), but whose devotion to his friend has a more than servile tinge. Warburton was at any rate a man ; and for his few intimates he had a true affection. They include Ralph Allen of Prior Park, who sat for the portrait of Allworthy ; and we regret that the bishop did not come into Fielding's canvas. He would have made short work of Square and Thwackum. We find Warburton relishing the *Genuine Remains* of Samuel Butler, and justly censuring Horace Walpole for his hoax on Rousseau. He reads *Fingal*, and at first thinks it authentic, but is for once persuaded that he was wrong. When past seventy, he seems to have mellowed, and we like to take leave of him in his own words :

> I think you have oft heard me say, that my delicious season is the autumn, the season which gives most life and vigour to my mental faculties. The light mists, or, as Milton calls them, the *steams*, that rise from the fields in one of these mornings, give the same *relief* to the views, that the blue of the plum (to take my ideas from the season) gives to the appetite. But I now enjoy little of this pleasure, compared to what I formerly had in an autumn morning when I used, with a book in my hand, to traverse the delightful lawns and hedgerows round about the town of Newark, the *unthinking* place of my nativity. Besides, my rheumatism now keeps me within in a morning, till the sun has exhaled the *blue off the plum*. And that prostitute, Fortune, will make me no amends, by enabling me to draw, and keep under my roof, the man whose converse has all the freshness, the variety, the riches, and the gay colouring of this happy season. And yet, as Shakespeare says of the figured clouds in a gilded evening, that *they are black Vesper's pageants*, so I am forced to say of autumn, that it too soon gives place to grisly winter.

IX

The bare and swept temple of the goddess of Reason was to be frequented all through the century, and drew votaries as diverse as Hume and Chesterfield, Bolingbroke and Paley. But there were deserters of note, who departed to shrines that could quicken the inner vision and nourish more exalted dreams. Berkeley, as we have seen, was one of them ; and another, not less ardent, was William Law [1] (1686-1761). He is always duly remembered as the author of the *Serious Call*, while his greater writings are ignored. He was a fellow of Emmanuel, the old home of the Puritan Platonists ; but, as a nonjuror, he lost his post, and went to obscure clerical work in London. If Law had imbibed any mystical temper at Cambridge, it lay long hidden ; and in any case it was not that of John Smith and his companions who had drunk at the fountains of Plotinus. During his first twenty years of authorship Law may be called a pure Augustan, anxiously devout, but also deeply rational ; a disputant, observer, and satirist, pungent, and elegant in form. From 1717 to about 1726 he is at war ; a master of his weapon, but maintaining the sternest courtesies of the duel. In his *Three Letters* (1717) to Benjamin Hoadly he struck into the 'Bangorian controversy,' which is outside our theme. I mention them to show how far Law's mind, whilst always keeping its allegiance to his church, was afterwards to travel. Hoadly denied the divine rights, but asserted the ecclesiastical supremacy, of the crown. Law defends the apostolic succession of the bishops and the spiritual authority of the church. And he fastens on the rash statement of Hoadly that the sincerity of an opinion was the test of its value. No one, he retorts, had questioned the 'sincerity' of inquisitors and crucifiers. He argues with skill the case of a nonjuring churchman. Six years later came his *Remarks* on Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, which had been reissued with its prose commentary. In saying that 'private vices were public benefits' Mandeville was arguing in terms as offensive as he could find that if greed and lust were extirpated the social hive would lose its motive power. A coarse but shrewd observer, he knew the man in the street well. Law does not argue, but reviles Mandeville's view of mankind and tries to force him into an admission of utter disbelief. He is still less effective, in a postscript to the tract, against a subtler sceptic, Bayle.

In 1726 he discoursed, in strangely fanatical terms, some of which are quoted by Gibbon, *On the Absolute Unlawfulness of the*

Stage Entertainments, thus striking into the quarrel[1] in which Dennis, Vanbrugh, Congreve, and many others took part. All these preludes were unpromising; but in the same year was published Law's *Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection*, in which his eloquence begins to find its wings and his true temper to come out. He is one of those who so read the Christian precept as to place the soul and the world in total opposition. The world, with its ambitions and luxuries, nay with its learning and its arts, is the enemy. John Byrom reports Law as saying,

> The bottom of all was that the world was a prison into which we were fallen, that we had nothing to do but to get out of it, that we had no misery but what was in it, that to be freed from it was all that we wanted, that this was the true foundation of all.

The worldling is as one *drunken*, who is the prey of 'an involuntary succession of ideas'; and this is a parable of the 'general disorder of our nature.' Such a belief is at the back of the *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1729).

This, like the *Ancren Riwle*, is a manual of devout behaviour; it influenced Wesley and Johnson and became the guide of thousands. Written in English of the best tradition, it is eminently reasonable in tone, and, except in its descriptions of character, unimaginative. The meteors and celestial glimpses, the *fire* and *light* and *abyssal life*, phrases pervading Law's later works, are not yet on the horizon. But the foe of the stage has some of the gifts of the comedian. The figures are often drawn with a kind of good temper, and Law does not frown till he comes to the application. Many of the sins that he lashes are innocent vanities. Feliciana, with her 'gewgaw happiness,' wears patches, goes to the play, likes cards, and loves dress; and, worst of all, she *is* happy: 'too gay and cheerful to consider what is right and wrong with regard to eternity.' Succus, the epicure, is drawn with great zest: in the evening he

> takes his glass, talks of the excellency of the English constitution, and praises that minister the most, who keeps the best table. On a Sunday night you may sometimes hear him condemning the iniquity of the town rakes; and the bitterest thing that he says against them, is this, that he verily believes some of them are so abandoned, as not to have a regular meal, or a sound night's sleep, in a week. At eleven, Succus bids all good night, and parts in great friendship. He is presently in bed, and sleeps till it is time to go to the coffee-house next morning.

Other victims are Negotius, who is temperate, honest, and

liberal, but who cares merely for money-making and business; Mundanus, a man of great judgment in affairs, who neglects only his devotions; and Flatus, who vainly seeks happiness—in drinking, in hunting, in building, and in study. Classicus, the scholar, who can write in Greek and Latin, keeps beside him the two Testaments because 'they are both to be had in Greek,' never says anything offensive against piety because he simply neglects it, and spends his time in 'restoring broken periods, and scraps of the ancients.' Classicus says his prayers, indeed, but only in the 'bare letter,' and he would rather write an epigram like Martial than pray like St. Austin. Law sometimes reminds us of Newman in his power of transfixing. He is careful, however, to balance his satire with eulogies, which if less witty are not less salient, and are often of great beauty. The longest is that of Miranda, 'under whose name' Gibbon[1] tells us that his aunt, Miss Hester Gibbon, is 'admirably described.' This must mean hardly that the lady sat for the picture (for she was only five-and-twenty when the *Serious Call* appeared), but that her long life of well-doing was to be shaped in accordance with it.

The historian, in his memoirs, gives a masterly and generous sketch of Law and his career; ending, however, with the two-edged sentence, that

> a philosopher must allow that he exposes, with equal severity and truth, the strange contradiction between the faith and practice of the Christian world.

Law had become tutor, in the house of Edward Gibbon the grandfather, to Edward Gibbon the second; and long remained there, says the historian, Edward the third, as 'the much-honoured friend and spiritual director of the whole family.' In 1740 he retired to his birthplace, King's Cliffe in Northamptonshire; and there, in partnership with Hester Gibbon and another lady, passed his days in almsgiving, devotion, and writing. Another of the aunts of the historian, so he states, is described as Flavia; she is a perfect type (worse than Feliciana) of the female worldling. Miranda is the pattern of the lay saint who lives only for God and for her fellow-creatures. Her counterpart among men is Ouranius, the good parson; but he only attains to full excellence by degrees. At first he buried himself in the classics being bored by his villagers; and he had

> sometimes thought it hard to be called to pray by any poor body, when he was just in the midst of one of Homer's battles.

But Ouranius came to know better, and he takes his place beside the pastors of Chaucer and Goldsmith. These 'characters' enliven in passing the grey texture of the *Serious Call.*

X

In the *Case of Reason* (1731), a reply to Tindal,[1] Law comes in sight of his later problem. He begins to feel that vital truth is not attainable through reason; and yet, some respectable work must still be found for reason to do. To banish it altogether would be an extreme measure. The solution is that reason can *recognise* truth, when once presented; though merely as an inactive 'beholder.' Later, Law seems to claim entire supremacy for intuition and the inner light, and reason is still further degraded. He is said to have begun to read Jakob Boehme, or Behmen (1575-1634), about 1734; and signs of the new influence appear in a *Demonstration* (1737) against certain over-literal views of the nature of the Eucharist. Here, and in a tract on regeneration, we hear that 'there is nothing in the universe but magnetism, and the impediments of it'; of the 'four elements' of the fallen soul, selfishness, envy, pride, and anger; of the *aching dark root of fire* within it; and how, by a miracle, love may enter into the *fiery root* of this lost angel. Such terms, as with Blake, are more than poetic figures, and soon acquire fixed but highly abstruse technical senses. Law, as time passes, leans more and more on these expressions, endlessly turning them over to extract their riches, and seeking to put them in order, so to make a scheme out of the dark idiom of the Lusatian shoemaker. 'I freely grant,' wrote John Wesley, 'that Mr. Law, by taking immense pains, has licked it into some shape, and he has made it hang tolerably together.' Wesley, nevertheless, dismisses the result as 'inimitable bombast,' and 'fustian not to be paralleled.'

For clues to the maze, those who disagree with Wesley must consult the experts.[2] Law became the professed interpreter of Boehme, causing dismay in the orthodox. We move amid a fantastic cosmogony which is not without its grandeur. Nature, when she came from the divine hand, was not such as we now know her. She too, like man, is 'fallen'; and the two falls are in essence the same. One day both will be 'redeemed,' and the pure pattern restored. The motive force both in man and nature is desire and will; and Law's language often recalls that of Schopenhauer. But he makes it plain that the power which will at last undo the effects of the fall is that of love. There are

many more refinements, and this is but the rudest account of Law's world-programme. The orthodox tenets are wrought into its fabric. The Trinity, election, grace remain, but with new meanings. I must only try to note some of the effects of Law's cult upon his form.

He still reasons ; and he reasons from irrational premisses to glorious conclusions. He discovers a gift of soaring eloquence, that keeps at a steady height. He is very copious, and his reiteration of image and symbol produces a kind of dazzling obscurity. His sentences lengthen out, they are not preconceived or studiously finished, but each clause is kindled by the last. The effect can sometimes be majestic : a word we use charily at all times, and of eighteenth-century writers very seldom. Among the chief documents for Law's later views are the *Earnest and Serious Answer to Dr. Trapp* (1740), and the *Appeal to All that Doubt* ; these two set forth something of an argument. More rapturous and visionary are the *Spirit of Prayer* (1749-50) ; the *Way to Divine Knowledge* (1752) ; and the *Spirit of Love* (1752-4). Here is a passage from a long chapter, which is sustained in the same style :

> That the deadness [1] of the earth may, and certainly will be brought to life by the united power of fire and light, is sufficiently shown us by the nature and office of the sun. The sun is the united power of fire and light, and therefore the sun is the raiser of life out of the deadness of the earth ; but because fire and light are united in the sun, is only the virtue of temporary fire and light, so it can only raise a short and fading, transitory life. But as sure as you see, that fire and light united in the sun, can change the deadness of the earth, into such a beautiful variety of a vegetable life, so sure are you, that this dark, gross earth is in its state of death and darkness, only for this reason, because it is broken off from the united power of fire and light : for as sure as the outward operation of the fire and light of the sun can change the deadness of the earth into a degree of life, so sure is it, that the earth lies in its present darkness, because it is separated from its own eternal fire and light. . . . And therefore every vegetable life, every beauty, power, and virtue which the sun calls forth out of the earth, tells us, with a divine certainty, that there will come a time, when all that is hid in the deadness, grossness, and darkness of the earth, will again be called up to a perfection of life and glory of beauty.

One more extract will show that the flame which kindled the prose of Hooker and Milton is not, after all, extinct in the year 1752 :

> Out of this transcendent [2] eternal nature, which is as universal and

immense as the Deity itself, do all the highest beings, Cherubims and Seraphims, all the hosts of angels, and all intelligent spirits, receive their birth, existence, substance, and form. They are all so many different, finite, bounded forms of the heavenly fire and light of eternal nature, into which creaturely beings the invisible triune God breathes His invisible Spirit, by which they become both the true children and likeness of the invisible Deity, and also the true offspring of His eternal nature ; and are fitted to rejoice with God, to live in the life of God, and live and work, and have their being, in that eternal nature, or kingdom of heaven, in which the Deity itself liveth and worketh.

Boehme was Law's principal but by no means his only source for these exalted visions. He tells Dr. Trapp that he had studied the mystics 'through all ages of the church,' from Dionysius the Areopagite downwards. 'I am as chargeable with the sentiments of all of them, as with those of J. Behmen.' He does not, however, think on Platonic or neo-Platonic lines ; nor does he appear to claim for himself the beatific vision. He must therefore be termed a mystic in the more general, not in the special sense. Before the end, Law finds himself in a peculiar relationship to the churches. He is in them all, or out of them all, it is hard to say which : a kind of eclectic, sitting aloof from controversy ; for controversy is the fruit of mere reasoning and not of vision. While staying in the fold where he was born, and conforming (though with many a private reserve as to its errors), he takes what heavenly light he can from any other cult ; and, all the while, he lives in his own esoteric, almost incommunicable world, which to others may seem dark with excess of light.

The *Spirit of Love*, the *Way to Divine Knowledge*, and the *Spirit of Prayer* are dialogues ; but Law, unlike Hume, makes little of the resources of that form. One Humanus, who remains long silent, bears at first a singular resemblance to Hume himself :

> For this twenty years [1749] I have known him to be of an even, cheerful temper, full of good-nature, and even quite calm and dispassionate in his attacks upon Christianity, never provoked by what was said either against his infidelity, or in defence of the Gospel.

But here the likeness ends ; for Humanus is now 'morose, peevish, and full of chagrin,' just because 'the truth has touched him, but it is only so far, as to be his tormentor.' In fact, Humanus, like Academicus, the learned don who is taught vital religion by Theophilus, is a mere man of

straw. Theophilus is Law ; and Rusticus, like Jakob Boehme, reaches the truth without any taint of booklore. To him, as to Theophilus, is revealed what Law in one of his letters calls 'that abyssal life [the *Ungrund* of Boehme] which can neither be spoken nor conceived by us.' Such language sometimes suggests pantheism ; but Law, again, is indignant with Warburton for styling him a follower of Spinoza ; seeing that he has never failed to insist on the 'essential, eternal, and absolute distinction between God and nature.'

His other writings, which are of less mark, include a long *Address to the Clergy*, and a *Dialogue* between a Methodist and a churchman (1760) ; and Law's occult views never seem to disturb his orthodoxy. Some of his letters remain ; they are answers to doubters and replies to critics, often in a severe uplifted strain, and all written in his pure, somewhat diffuse English.

XI

But more light on Law is thrown by the oddest of his disciples, John Byrom [1] (Ch. XIII.), whose journals tell us much of his life and conversation. Byrom usually turns his master's poetic prose, so far as he can understand it, into prosaic verse ; Law, it appears, liked [2] to be thus doggedly and copiously paraphrased. Byrom's ordinary muse is about on the level of Defoe's ; but, unlike Defoe, he is full of an innocent amiable humour ; and he is a born improviser in many metres, not all of them equally fitted for high theology. He is capable of writing

> By a process of love, from the crib to the cross,
> Did the only-begotten recover our loss. . . .

And he transposes Law's church principles into pleasingly literal terms :

> The Church of England is the part that I
> Have always lived in, and now choose to die. . . .
> Willing in heart and spirit to unite
> With every Church, in what is just and right.

But Byrom can do much better than this ; and in *An Hymn to the Goodness of God* he versifies Law's theory of regeneration :

> For Nature itself is a darkness express
> If a splendour from Thee does not fill it and bless —
> An abyss of the powers of all creaturely life,
> Which are in themselves but an impotent strife

Of Action, Reaction, and Whirling around,
Till the rays of thy Light pierce the jarring profound;
Till thy goodness compose the dark natural storm,
And enkindle the bliss of Light, Order, and Form.

This is not so unworthy; the anapaestics have got rid of the mere tinkle and prettiness ('My time, O ye Muses, was happily spent') that is associated with the measure; and Byrom has caught some of the high, satisfied ardour of his original. He, too, is inspired by watching the dark seething elements of nature, with their promise of far-off things. In one piece, the *Soul's Tendencies towards its True Centre*, of an admirable spirit and rhythm, the process is transferred to the world within; and in another, *On the Origin of Evil*, he anticipates the metre, and more than the metre, of the *Two Voices*:

Evil, if rightly understood,
Is but the skeleton of Good,
Divested of its flesh and blood.

Law's mystical writings, like *Siris* and the *Light of Nature*, express the craving to see beyond the mental horizons of the time. Like Berkeley and Tucker, he begins as a reasoner; but all three end in some kind of theosophy or fantasy, in islands that are haunted by voices from above and by shapes grotesque or glorious. Such visions, if they mean little to the historian of pure thought, are of mark in the history of imagination. Indeed, in this direction Law and Berkeley far outstripped all the eighteenth-century poets before Blake. And the protest of such solitaries against the purely rational temper is in sharp contrast with another revolt which affected millions of minds. The literary gift of the Wesleys, with which I am chiefly concerned, has been somewhat overshadowed by their importance in the drama of Western religion. They gave classic expression, in prose and verse, to the feeling of the masses whom they stirred; and I shall not pretend to describe the writings of their followers, or their place in the history of the churches.

XII

As an author, John Wesley [1] (1703-1791) stands apart from other divines of his time. He can describe as well as Walpole or Boswell; indeed, he is a purer writer than either. He became a man of letters as if by chance. 'No man,' he said, 'should be above writing correctly'; but his aim was to

broadcast his voice in the service of the Lord. He aimed at the unlettered as well as the lettered class. He is credited with some two hundred and thirty publications ; his fertility rivals that of Defoe. Much of this labour, like his myriads of sermons, did its work and is buried ; and no entire book can be pointed to as his monument. His journals have to be sifted for the harvest ; and some of his tracts are literature too. He can be a very good and something like a great writer. And we must think of him, with his appeal to the deeper emotions, as an ally of the new poets and recoverers of romance, working unawares and far off. A new source of vital feeling, of ' experience,' was to be touched by his ministry and by his organising power. He was the ' dowser,' the man with the divining twig, who finds new springs that only need the spade. There was water before, but not enough ; and no one had dreamed there was so much. And he had to prove, what will always be debated, that the new supply was pure.

It was well that he could write, with so many good writers ranged against him. Butler and Hume equally detested ' enthusiasm,' and so did Law, at first Wesley's master and inspirer. Wesley exchanged blows with Middleton, and with Warburton and other bishops. He attacked the Moravians, the Quakers, the Calvinists, the Papists, and the freethinkers ; and firmly, though in vain, refused to be identified with the ' enthusiasts.' The Protestant bodies propagate by violent fission. These disputes involved some of the critical points of theology, election and justification, freewill and original sin. The real question concerned the very organ of truth. The central ' experience,' in Wesley's eyes, though supported by reason, was not given by reason ; it was personal and incommunicable. And it must only come in *his* fashion. Wesley would have none of Boehme or Swedenborg ; but he was in fact nearer to them in spirit than to Butler or to Warburton.

He was past thirty when he commenced author, though he had published some prayers already. He had been an Oxford tutor, classically trained ; had led in 1729 the ' methodist ' society founded by his brother Charles ; and had done parish work under his father. The first instalment of his *Journals* was printed in 1738 ; they relate his voyage, taken three years before, to Georgia, his ties with the Moravians, his mission under Oglethorpe, and his early romance. At Charlestown he issued the first of many hymn-books : a fertile industry, long to be carried on in partnership with Charles, the more poetic spirit of the pair. The years 1737-9 were critical. The date of his

decisive conversion, May 24, 1738, is cherished by his church ; and in a classic passage he describes the reading, at the meeting-house in Aldersgate Street, of the Epistle to the Romans. The formal foundation of Methodism is often dated in the next year, when Wesley began to preach in the open. There was to be no further crisis in his inner man. One of the most active apostles known to history, he rode and preached, he wrote and fought and administered, for half a century. The Moravians had led him, through the agency of Peter Böhler, towards the truth, but he broke with them ; and he diverged from his ally George Whitefield, the orator and Calvinist. He clung, much more closely than his flock, to the Church of England ; but what was accounted an open severance did not occur till 1784, when he assumed powers of ordination.

His writings, of which literature is a precious and occasional by-product, must be very loosely classified. (1) Many are educational : Greek, Latin, and Hebrew grammars ; a ' compendium ' of logic ; selections, ruthlessly edited for the simple, from *Paradise Lost* and *Night Thoughts* ; and many abridgments —of the *Imitatio*, the *Serious Call*, the *Life of Mme Guyon*, the *Fool of Quality*, and the *Colloquies* of Erasmus. *Directions concerning Pronunciation and Gesture* bring Wesley before us as Horace Walpole saw him, a skilled actor managing his voice and limbs. ' Your eyes should always have your hands in view ' ; you must speak neither fast nor slow, nor in ' a thick clutter-ing manner.' (2) There are many defences and chronicles of the movement, including the *Character of a Methodist* (1742), and the *Plain Account of the People called Methodists* (1749) ; also masses of controversial works, now of purely historical or sectarian interest. (4) Of the formal treatises the most imposing is the *Doctrine of Original Sin* (1757), an example of Wesley's tireless and indeed tiresome dialectic. (5) There are six volumes of sermons, chosen from the multitude that Wesley uttered, exclaiming ' I look upon all the world as my parish.' (6) The *Life* (1786) of the saintly John William Fletcher of Madeley is a plain and graceful record, set down in Wesley's later years. (7) A miscellany may be added. He also poured out brief ' words ' for drunkards, smugglers, and street-walkers ; lectured, from the Tory point of view, the American colonists ; wrote laborious *Explanatory Notes* on the New Testament ; and edited in fifty volumes a *Christian Library* (1749-55) of the English divines and of translations from the Fathers.

XIII

Wesley's skill in statement and the warmth of his eloquence are well seen in his *Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (1743) and in his *Farther Appeal* (1745). The first of these is a fervid defence of his creed. He urges that it is one of 'love and joy and peace,' and an antidote to the miserable life of the worldling; that it is founded in reason, for was not Paul one of the greatest of reasoners? that, as in the case of Paul, faith is usually 'given in a moment,' although it may, indeed, come 'by degrees'; and that it is false to say that such a doctrine 'encourages sinners,' for it only encourages them to repent. The fruits are seen in the good lives of the saved believers. Also, 'we were born and bred in the English church, and desire to die therein': a sincere profession, although Wesley's generalship set up an *imperium in imperio* which was destined to break away. Coleridge speaks of his 'entire absence and unsusceptibility of ideas'; and Wesley is hardly deemed a theologian of the first rank. Nor had he the genius of great observant moralists like Butler or Fielding. He had one key for every lock. Perhaps his great power was the gift of communicating hope. He repudiated the darker tenets of Whitefield, and refused to believe 'that there is one soul upon earth who has not ever had a possibility of escaping eternal damnation.' And he brought happiness, his own kind of happiness, to a great congregation.

The needs of Wesley's apostolate do not wholly account for the abnormal energy of his pen. 'Method' was a necessity to him, and he had a passion for committing himself to paper. He set down and dated all that he read, saw, or felt. He could not be silent, even to himself. To this habit we owe the *Journals*. At intervals of few years, down to 1791, he published 'extracts' from them, which together fill many volumes. He was noted for his excessive frankness and for his habit of asking advice. But he was also very careful; and in a mixture of cipher, shorthand, and code,[1] he set down a mass of more private matter, much of which has now been published. Some of the new passages, which are found 'painful' by admirers, greatly enliven the story and increase our sympathy with Wesley. The best of them relate to the ill-starred mission to Georgia, and the love-affair with Miss Sophia Hopkey: a tragi-comedy with a streak of the grotesque, on which a play might well be written. We see Wesley's inflammable nature, his passion for advising, his

latent devotion to his future destiny, and his vein of superstition. The tale (which was partially known before the recent additions) is too intricate to tell here ; but one scene in the play would be the desert island where the couple halted on their voyage to Savannah :

> We supped, went to prayer together, and then spread a sail over us on four stakes to keep off the night dews. Under this on one side were Miss Sophy, myself, and one of our boys who came to me from Savannah ; on the other our boat's crew. . . . Observing in the night, the fire we lay by burning bright, that Miss Sophy was broad awake, I asked her, ' Miss Sophy, how far are you engaged to Mr. Mellichamp ? ' She answered, ' I have promised him either to marry him or to marry no one at all.' I said (which indeed was the expression of a sudden wish, not of any formed design), ' Miss Sophy, I should think myself happy if I was to spend my life with you.' She burst out into tears and said, ' I am every way unhappy. I won't have Tommy ; for he is a bad man. And I can have none else.' . . . We ended our conversation with a psalm.

Another scene would show Wesley drawing lots to decide whether he should marry Sophy, or 'think of her no more' ; and the lot fell that he should think of her no more. But he did ; and yet other scenes would show him, barring her (now married to another) from the communion table for neglect of attendance ; and fighting his case, and also a general attack upon his ministrations, in court, and then escaping home. A year later he sat down to write a formal ' character ' of Sophy, which shows a surprising mixture of tenderness, cruelty, and self-assurance. Perhaps it was some spiritual *raison d'état*, a sense of vaster affairs awaiting him, that kept him from marrying the lady and settling overseas. Wesley's life was to be chequered with distractions of this kind. He describes very lucidly his obscure relations with Mrs. Grace Murray [1] in the years 1748-9, an affair that has been much discussed. A still more wretched business was his marriage in 1751 ; his own side of it is to be read in his letters to his wife. She had opened his letters, traduced him, and assaulted him ; and he puts down some eight numbered items of the points which he dislikes in Mrs. Wesley's behaviour, and which she would do well to amend. But none of these calamities were to stay his mission ; he rides over them all, and continues to preach, organise, and write. Wesley's account of his American adventure exhibits him before he is *set*, with the early freshness still upon his style.

XIV

He must have preached on an average at least twice a day during all his years of pilgrimage. England he knew even better than Cobbett, and he went many times to Ireland and Scotland. The *Journals* give the running commentary. They are swelled by letters of humble persons who bear witness, and by records of happy death-beds. Some entries describe the conversion at the eleventh hour of persons who went cheerfully to the gallows; but Wesley at times shrewdly wonders how long the impression would have lasted in the event of a reprieve. Nor were all the victims great sinners; we must remember for what comparative trifles our ancestors hanged one another. But most of the stories are of souls saved under the spell of Wesley's preaching. Impressive in their endless monotony, these scenes are again and again defaced by the ugly symptoms, by the fits, convulsions, fallings on the earth, and hysteria, which attended the casting out of the devil from such rude breasts, and which doubtless, more than all else, deepened the disgust of the refined classes with the phenomena of 'enthusiasm':

one was so wounded by the sword of the Spirit, that you would have imagined she could not live a moment. But immediately His abundant kindness was showed, and she loudly sang of His righteousness.

There was nothing new in the procedure, of which Browning's *Ned Bratts* is a different rendering; and the chronicles of Bunyan are of the same pattern. What was new was the life and passion and genius put into the affair, and Wesley's skill as a captain of souls.

He was as sensitive to his audience as an actor or a professor; or rather, as a physician is to his patients. 'A calm stupid attention' he could not bear:

At Newcastle, whither we came about ten, some to whom we spoke at our inn were very attentive; but a gay young woman waited on us, quite unconcerned. However, we spoke on. When we went away, she fixed her eyes, and neither moved nor said one word, but appeared as much astonished as if she had seen one risen from the dead.

The words which he was enabled to speak, he says on one occasion, 'were as a hammer and a flame.' Anything rather than stagnation; Wesley throve on danger and hardship and enmity, and much of the *Journal* is occupied with his encounters with

the mob. He met it with the same kind of natural courage that he showed towards his doctrinal and ecclesiastical opponents. 'However, we spoke on.' He was equally ready to talk down a crowd of ruffians and to fight, on paper, the whole episcopal bench. Some of his best writing is a description of such scenes; and, while his disputes with Lavington or Warburton are deep in dust, many pages of the *Journal* are as fresh as ever. Once, at Walsall, he was half-killed; but, owing to a 'chain of providences,' escaped; and also, we may add, because he had the temper of an excellent soldier:

> From the beginning to the end I found the same presence of mind as if I had been sitting in my own study. But I took no thought for one moment before another; only once it came into my mind that if they should throw me into the river, it would spoil the papers that were in my pocket. For myself, I did not doubt but I should swim across, having but a thin coat and a light pair of boots.

One more passage may be given at length to show, not only Wesley's courage, but his humane temper and his gift of narrative. He cared for children, and in his treatise on the *Doctrine of Original Sin* one of his counts against the ancients, and against human nature at large, is the story of cruelty to the young. He was one of the first religious leaders, in his *Thoughts upon Slavery* (1774), to protest against that institution. And in the following entry he finds time to be sorry for the bull:

> I rode once more to Pensford, at the earnest request of several serious people. The place where they desired me to preach was a little green spot near the town. But I had no sooner begun than a great company of rabble, hired (as we afterwards found) for that purpose, came furiously upon us, bringing a bull which they had been baiting, and now strove to drive in among the people. But the beast was wiser than his drivers; and continually ran either on one side of us or the other, while we quietly sang praise to God, and prayed for about an hour. The poor wretches, finding themselves disappointed, at length seized the bull, now weak and tired after having been so long torn and beaten both by dogs and men; and by main strength partly dragged and partly thrust him in among the people. When they had forced their way to the little table on which I stood, they strove several times to throw it down, by thrusting the helpless beast against it; who, of himself, stirred no more than a log of wood. I once or twice put aside his head with my hand, that the blood might not drop upon my clothes; intending to go on as soon as the hurry should be a little over. But the table falling down, some of our friends caught me in their arms and carried me right away on their shoulders, while the rabble wreaked their vengeance on

the table, which they tore bit from bit. We went a little way off, where I finished my discourse without any noise or interruption. (*March 19, 1747.*)

The same qualities come out in Wesley's letters. They too are clear-cut ; and the note of authority is everywhere. He is the director, the eternal tutor, the general who issues orders to his flock, to his preachers, and to his friends. To dignitaries, in his old age, he speaks, and with good right, in the language of an equal, and also with youthful vehemence. One of his most impassioned letters is addressed to Lord North, whom he adjures not to use force against the Americans :

For God's sake, for the sake of the King, of the nation, of your lovely family, remember Rehoboam ! Remember Philip the Second ! Remember Charles the First !

Lord North may have wondered what Rehoboam had to do with the question. But Wesley, on reading Johnson's *Taxation no Tyranny*, was converted to the Tory view, adapted the tract, published it as his own under a new title, faced much abuse in consequence, and was thanked by Johnson. No man had a greater gift of certitude, and if he ever altered an opinion he did so thoroughly. Much later, about 1790, he is found writing, to a bishop unidentified, one of his best and most stately monitions, bidding the prelate leave the Methodists alone. And in another epistle, written at white heat when he was seventy-six, he scarifies certain of the brethren for their severity to one William Shent, who has fallen into sin, but who in former days had behaved well and loyally to Wesley. Shent, indeed, has to be expelled ; ' but must he be also starved ? '

XV

Wesley's attitude towards the reasoning faculty deserves attention. At first we tax him with boundless credulity. In every incident, great or small, that turned out well he saw, like Bunyan, a special providence. Much has been made of his proneness to accept a supernatural explanation at every turn. Tales of miraculous cures, of telepathy, and of sudden judgments upon blasphemers, he rarely sifts and usually believes. He was often pelted with stones, which he calls, in his nervous style, ' artillery, ready at hand, for the devil's drunken companions.' Sometimes they not only missed him but, by a peculiar mercy, hit some of his assailants who were pressing him hard. Black and white agents, unseen, are at work every-

where. Once his horse runs away with him and his two grandchildren, and, on the edge of a precipice, stops short; and he gives seven reasons for thinking that 'both good and evil angels had a large share in this transaction.' One of the strangest instances of this habit of mind occurs in a reference to a certain convert, or pervert; the tone is half-playful:

> What a wise providence was it that this poor young man turned Quaker, some years before he ran mad! So the honour of turning his brain now rests upon them, which otherwise must have fallen upon the Methodists.

When the phenomena seem too remarkable he is content to say that he knows not what to think, or that he simply relates the 'naked fact,' explain it how you may. He does indeed append some gently sceptical notes to the story of Elizabeth Hobson, who not only saw many absent persons 'just when they died, or little before,' but was painfully visited by the spirit of her wicked grandfather, who had been drowned fourteen years ago. But we are not surprised when we find him thinking that Beattie has refuted Hume, and that Hume is 'the most insolent despiser of truth and virtue that ever appeared in the world': or stating, in the year 1768, that 'giving up witchcraft is, in effect, giving up the Bible.' On this side of his mind Wesley belonged to the pre-critical age, and was at one with his audiences.

None the less, Wesley is in his own way a spokesman of the 'age of reason.' He is prepared to argue for the truth of his stories; and he is on his mettle all the while to show that his cause is rational. He is shocked by Luther speaking, in his comment on Galatians, as though reason were an enemy of the Gospel:

> What is reason (the faculty so called) but the power of apprehending, judging, and discoursing? which power is no more to be condemned in the gross than seeing, hearing, or feeling.

And he is ready to prove his case from Scripture as well as from 'experience.' He refuses to be called a 'mystic,' and has all his life to fight against the word 'enthusiast.' It is best

> to drop quietists and mystics altogether and at all hazards keep to the plain, practical, written word of God.

Swedenborg is an 'ingenious, lively, entertaining madman,' and his doctrine depends 'entirely on the assertion of a single brain-sick man.' And, most reprehensibly, his 'account of hell leaves nothing terrible in it; for, first, he quenches the unquenchable fire.'

XVI

This logical decided cast of mind is reflected in Wesley's manner and in his ideals of writing.[1] He praises the Sermon on the Mount for its 'exact method,' and adds that 'no rhapsody, no incoherence' ever 'comes from the spirit of Christ.' In his *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, written for 'plain unlettered men,' he speaks of the 'exactness and ease' of the inspired style. In a letter he says that 'St. John speaks as high and as deep things as Jacob Behmen; why then does not Jacob speak as plain as him [*sic*]?' He hates disorder, obscurity, and verbiage. He himself is plain enough, though his disputations are swollen by the inconceivably irksome trick, inherited from the last century, of quoting his opponent sentence by sentence. But he is as concise as Swift when he tells a story, or sums up a case, or judges an author. Latinism never touched him; his audience forced him to be simple. 'Clearness in particular,' he writes to a friend, 'is necessary to you and me, because we are to instruct people of the lowest understanding.' And to another, 'I hope that you have now got quit of your queer arch expressions in preaching, and that you speak as plain and dull as one of us.' And to a third, 'Scream no more, at peril of your soul.' And Wesley's own style is in accord; except, perhaps, in his early youth, when he writes florid stiff letters to his friend 'Aspasia,' afterwards Mrs. Delany. He approaches nearest to declamation in his book on *Original Sin*, with its overdrawn picture of the wickedness of the pagan world. His view of Roman morals appears to be based on Juvenal, whom he quotes freely.

His opinions upon authors are an amusing menagerie. It is known how he read while riding from town to town, always with a slack rein lest his horse should stumble; and he dashes down his likes and dislikes. He doubts whether 'Judas claims so hot a place in hell as Alexander the Great.' His saying that 'it is impossible to write a fine poem in French' is worthy of Matthew Arnold. If Chesterfield 'is rewarded according to his desert, his name will stink to all generations.' On the other hand, Ossian 'is little inferior to Homer or Virgil; in some respects superior to both'; and Blackmore's *Prince Arthur* is 'not a contemptible poem.' These judgments are at least untamed and unborrowed. Wesley is more at home with the classics, and many a dreary polemic is refreshed by scraps from Lucretius or Horace. Once, within a few pages, he cites Virgil, Cicero, Hadrian's *Hymn*, and Milton. All this is engaging;

and we like to think of the great evangelist in the intervals of his mission paying his tribute, however strangely, to letters. But his *Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems from the most Celebrated English Authors* (1744) does credit to his taste. He calls it a 'chaste collection'; and it includes pieces from Sir John Davies and George Herbert, and the best things of Parnell and Dyer.

XVII

There was a strong vein of versifying in the Wesley clan. The father, Samuel the elder, was an active maker of rhymes. The eldest son, Samuel the younger [1] (1691-1739), a schoolmaster, remained aloof from Methodism, and sat humorously reading and spinning stanzas. This *other* Wesley, more genial than the world-famous couple (and indeed he is something of a relief from them), was liked by Pope and Atterbury; and his lines 'to Kitty' might have come from his friend Prior:

> Dear Kitty, now my counsel take,
> Now is the dangerous season;
> If not, admit the rhyme to make
> Atonement for the reason.

Wroote, a Heroic Poem, gives a by no means dismal picture of the family parsonage. But Samuel Wesley was not always light. He was also a friend of Oglethorpe; and some indignant, prosaic lines in the *Prisons Opened* (1728) give an early foretaste of Langhorne or Crabbe:

> With weighty fetters galled, the sufferers groan,
> Or close-screwed rivets crack the solid bone;
> Their only bed, dank earth unpaved and bare;
> Their only covering is the chains they wear;
> Debarred from cheerful morn, and human sight,
> In lonely, restless, and enduring night;
> The strongest health unsinewed by disease,
> And famine wasting life by slow degrees;
> Piecemeal alive they rot, long doomed to bear
> The pestilential, foul, imprisoned air,
> Unless the friendly fumes on reason prey,
> And kind distraction take their sense away.

The Wesleys have something like a common style, very clear, articulate, and sharp; and they all find it easier to begin than to stop. Their *Memorials* [2] reveal a passionate race, in whom 'brains, high-blooded, ticked, two centuries since.' Their tone

is not merely devotional and edifying. The notable mother, Susanna, describes how the children were 'taught to fear the rod and cry softly'; and she writes to her husband, who disliked her religious meetings, that he must not 'desire,' but must 'command' her, to desist, so that she herself may be accounted free from guilt on the Last Day. It is the very model of a threatening letter to a spouse. The daughter Emilia, Mrs. Harper, is also determined, and repels the good advice of John:

> You seem to assert that we ought to fix all our thoughts, hopes, and desires on God alone. Here again I differ . . . God does not deny all subordinate love to the creature.

The *Memorials* also tell of another sister, Martha, Boswell's 'lean, lank, preaching Mrs. Hall,' who at Johnson's table in 1761 'talked of the resurrection of the human race in general.' We hear of her firmness with her blackguard husband and of her charity towards his victim and his victim's infant. The story of Mehetabel, or Hetty, Mrs. Wright, is better known: how, on escaping from a wicked lawyer, she vowed to accept her first offer of marriage, and how it came from a plumber described as 'illiterate, coarse, vulgar, and unkind'; how John, in the family pulpit, preached *at* her relentless father on the virtue of charity; and how she at last turned Methodist to escape from 'this selfish, diabolical world.' Hetty had wit and beauty; her sprightliness was not wholly crushed; but her verses can be pungent and desperate, as well as neatly finished. Her *Address to her Husband* concludes:

> Till life, on terms severe as these,
> Shall, ebbing, leave my heart at ease;
> To thee thy liberty restore
> To laugh when Hetty is no more.

And her *Epitaph on Myself* is worth quoting:

> Destined, while living, to sustain
> An equal share of grief and pain;
> All various ills of human race
> Within this breast had once a place.
> Without complaint she learned to bear
> A living death, a long despair,
> Till, hard oppressed by adverse fate,
> O'ercharged she sunk beneath its weight,
> And to this peaceful tomb retired,
> So much esteemed, so long desired.
> The painful mortal conflict 's o'er;
> A broken heart can bleed no more.

XVIII

The *Journal* of Charles Wesley [1] (1707-1788) stretches over twenty years (1736-56); and the partnership of the brothers was of the closest. They might differ on the mysteries of 'progressive and entire sanctification'; Charles might adhere more closely to the English Church; and their family affairs might be, at times, unhappily intertangled. But they patrolled the land on the same mission; their inner experience was the same; and the likeness of their prose is remarkable. Charles Wesley can describe as pointedly as his brother. Nothing can be better done than his dialogues with Oglethorpe in Georgia, or than the sketch of one Appee, a most successful ancestor of Mr. Pecksniff, who came out in his true colours on the journey home. Charles showed his metal in the anti-Methodist riots in Cornwall; and also at Devizes, where 'the gentlemen plied' the mob 'with pitchers of ale, as much as they could drink.' And there is the 'civil message,' worthy of some one in Fielding, from the parson at Rochester, that 'he would be glad to drink a glass of wine with me, but would not lend me his pulpit for fifty guineas.' Charles, too, is protected by many particular providences. He faces the raging colliers; 'and, where I turned,' he adds, 'Satan lost ground.' Some of the notorious affairs of the time also appear in his pages. Like Walpole and Hickey, he describes the condemnation of Earl Ferrers; and how he, Wesley, put up vain prayers for his repentance. He lived to see the Gordon riots in 1780. His *Journal* has been somewhat obscured by the figure of his brother, and by his own poetical attainments.

The shares of the couple in the immense industry of hymn-writing [2] cannot be precisely unravelled. John Wesley wrote many of his own, which sometimes have more religious passion than poetical quality, and he edited many composed by Charles; but he excelled in his translations from Paulus Gerhardt, the Protestant singer, from the Catholic Johann Scheffler, known as Angelus Silesius, and from other Germans. But natural selection, and the popular instinct, have saved many more of Charles's hymns. He is said to have written over six thousand; and he is by far the largest contributor to the standard, or 'large,' Methodist collection of 1780. He may be thought to stand at the head of all English hymnodists, if we regard quantity as well as poetic gift. Many of his best pieces, 'Jesu, lover of my soul,' and 'Christ, whose glory fills the skies,' belong to no denomination; and the Anglican as well as the 'free'

churches have adopted them as classics. During half a century scores of volumes appeared, signed by one of the brothers or by both.

Charles Wesley's poetry presents with the utmost intensity all the phases in the evangelical drama: 'conviction of unbelief,' despair, struggle, hope, assurance, relapse, recovery, and blessedness. They form, taken together, what Dante calls a 'comedy': a story, that is, which is harsh at the outset but fortunate in its ending: *eius materia prospere terminatur*. The hymn-book of 1780 is arranged on some such principle, by which musical expression is given to the believer's progress. But Charles Wesley also celebrates the events of the Gospels; he indites 'graces' and funeral poems, not to mention religious satires: and he prays for king and country during the Forty-Five. Indeed, the Wesleys often used verse as a weapon of offence. Their lines, written against the predestinarians, *On God's Everlasting Love* almost recall *Holy Willie's Prayer*. Charles Wesley had a pretty vein of sarcasm; and the Calvinist is thus made to describe the fate of the lost:

> The righteous God consigned
> Them over to their doom,
> And sent the Saviour of mankind
> To damn them from the womb;
> To damn for falling short
> Of what they could not do,
> For not believing the report
> Of that which was not true.

It was difficult to retort in kind on the more merciful doctrine held by the Wesleyans.

John Wesley tersely and truly observed of a volume of hymns by his brother, that 'some are bad, some good, some excellently good.' The good hymns, as usual, outnumber the good poems. Charles Wesley has the note of the *improvisatore*, with whom it is hit or miss. He writes much that has no literary character at all; and he goes wrong, not through over-elaboration, but through neglect of finish. Some of his measures, and especially his favourite lolloping anapaestics, are dangerous:

> Who in pity and grace
> Hath shortened his race,
> And caught up a worm to the sight of His face.

Yet the same strain is sometimes pleasant and juvenile:

> My Saviour and King,
> Thy conquest I sing,
> Goliath is slain with a stone and a sling.

And in some of the *Graces*, written for the young, there is a natural rhythm of the happiest kind, that suggests Christina Rossetti :

> O Father of all,
> That fillest with good
> The ravens that call
> On Thee for their food. . . .

The best of Charles Wesley's hymns are full of verbal music and easily rememberable sound. The masters of this particular gift, Addison and Watts, had eschewed ' inversions ' of accent and too curious modulations, and liked to charge their lines with full open vowels, with all the wrong clusters of consonants weeded out. ' Whilst all the stars that round her burn ' ; ' A thousand ages in Thy sight ' ; ' Time, with his ever-rolling stream.' Charles Wesley catches this kind of magnificence. In all but one of the eighteen lines of ' Christ, whose glory fills the skies ' there are two and even three ringing vowels. And his rhythm often keeps the hymn going when the language flags. Also he can invent a gallant military tune, as in ' Soldiers of Christ, arise.' *The Taking of Jericho*, as it proceeds, becomes a spiritual allegory ; but the *lyra heroica* is heard in the narrative itself :

> The walls are compassed round ;
> This circuit is the last ;
> The ark stands still ; the trumpets sound
> A long continued blast.
> The people turn their eyes
> On the devoted walls ;
> And, Shout, the mighty Joshua cries ;
> And lo, the city falls.

Charles Wesley often attains to poetry, and is much oftener on the brink of it. He pays heavily for his facility ; his instinct for words is uncertain ; but no English writer of hymns has struck so many chords of religious feeling, and with such wide acceptance. The gift of hymnody was widely bestowed during this period ; besides the work of Doddridge, there is Augustus Montague Toplady's ' Rock of ages ' (1775) ; and the next great contribution was that of Cowper to the *Olney Hymns* (1779).

XIX

Three more of the writers on religion who afford some literary interest may be noticed in conclusion. They are of very diverse temper. The first, Soame Jenyns [1] (1704-1787), is best known,

and that somewhat unfairly, as the victim of Johnson's roughest and most powerful piece of prose. This rejoinder in the *Literary Magazine* was provoked by Jenyns' *Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil* (1757). Johnson, it may be noted, quotes much of the essay with approval, and once praises the 'beauty of a paragraph.' But a combination of limp reasoning and light optimism, above all when offered in *defence* of the faith, seemed intolerable. In the passage that enraged him it was argued that even as man, for his own needs, inflicts pain on the animals, so perhaps the angels, or higher intelligences, may inflict it for their pleasure upon man. Johnson, in his best style, suggests, that perhaps their pleasure may be to make a fool of a Soame Jenyns and to persuade him that he is a philosopher; and he sketches the supposed malice of the heavenly powers:

> as we drown whelps and kittens, they amuse themselves now and then with sinking a ship, and stand round the fields of Blenheim and the walls of Prague, as we encircle a cockpit.

Later in life Jenyns produced an orthodox *View* (1776) of the Christian evidences, which Johnson called 'a pretty book'; but it is his *Free Inquiry* that despite its weaknesses shows his unusual independence of mind. He is a believer in the pre-existence and transmigration of souls, and is really a kind of dualist or Manichean, holding that evil is neither created nor removable by God. To show that Jenyns could write prose (as well as some trim verses, hereafter to be quoted), and that his 'optimism' has a sombre side, some sentences may be rescued from this forgotten work:

> This world is evidently formed for a place of punishment as well as probation; a prison, or house of correction, to which we are committed, some for a longer, and some for a shorter period; some to the severest labour, others to more indulgent tasks; and if we consider it under this character, we shall perceive it admirably fitted for the end for which it was intended. It is a spacious, beautiful, and durable structure; it contains many various apartments, a few very comfortable, many tolerable, and some extremely wretched; it is enclosed with a fence so impenetrable, that none can surmount it but with the loss of life. Its inhabitants likewise exactly resemble those of other prisons; they come in with malignant dispositions, and unruly passions, from whence, like other confined criminals, they receive great part of their punishment by abusing and injuring each other . . . [a picture follows of the horrors of war]. Can we be spectators of this horrid tragedy, without considering the performers as condemned criminals, compelled, like the

gladiators of the ancients, to receive their punishment from each other's hands ? The orator, the poet, and the historian may celebrate them, as heroes fighting for the rights and liberties of their respective countries ; but the Christian philosopher can look on them in no other light than as condemned spirits exiled into human flesh, and sent into the world to chastise each other for past offences. . . . Who, that surveys this melancholy picture of the present life, can entertain a doubt, but that it is intended for a state of punishment, and therefore must be subsequent to some former, in which this punishment was deserved ?

The second writer is of a far more mawkish order. A tall, massive, now long defunct volume, over five hundred pages in length, and published in 1789, contains the works of the Rev. James Hervey (1714-1758), who is best known for his *Meditations among the Tombs* (1746-7). These followed hard upon the *Night Thoughts*, which are their obvious model ; and Hervey has some of the more blatant qualities of Young, without his poetry or his power. The *Meditations* were for a time the rage ; there were yearly editions throughout the author's lifetime ; and his ceaseless flow of funereal rhetoric hit the taste of the moment :

One night Corinna was all gaiety in her spirits, all finery in her apparel, at a magnificent ball. The next night she lay pale and stiff, an extended corpse, and ready to be mingled with the mouldering dead. . . . Instead of sumptuous tables and delicious treats, the poor voluptuary is himself a feast for fattened insects ; the reptile riots in his flesh.

Young had written, 'the worm shall riot on that rose so red' ; but the worm has now become a reptile, and Hervey has managed, as usual, to vulgarise the idea. He was a classical scholar, and admired Milton and Thomson ; he liked scenery, and dilutes, in similar fashion, the *Seasons* ; and he is described as a good and devout rector of his parish. But his *Reflections on a Flower-Garden*, his *Winter Piece*, and his *Contemplations on the Night and Starry Heavens*, if less sombre than his musings among the tombs, are equally flat, and have the same kind of bastard eloquence. A century earlier, or later, it would have been impossible ; and I mention it chiefly to show how the great imaginative tradition, which often warns off, or restrains, even a minor writer from excess, had departed, and had not re-arisen. Unless, indeed, we compare Hervey with Martin Tupper, he is hard to match : and we may perhaps forecast the note of *Proverbial Philosophy* in his remark about the *Faerie Queene* :

I am determined never to look into it again, never to gather the honey of poetry from the briars of contamination.

It should, however, be credited to Hervey that he wished to reprint at his own cost the poems of Giles and Phineas Fletcher; after, it is true, 're-touching' them himself. His lengthy dialogues, *Theron and Aspasio* (1755) are mostly theological; his tenets and temper, to the disgust of Wesley, were Calvinistic, although he had been one of the earliest members of the Methodist band.

I will not dwell on the solid, much-read treatises, 'standard' in their kind, of the third writer, that most moderate and learned of nonconformists, Philip Doddridge[1] (1702-1751); on his *Family Expositor*, a lengthy expansion of the Gospels; or on his *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* (1745), which traces with methodical fervour the progress of the sinner towards salvation. He also wrote many notable hymns, including 'My God, and is Thy table spread,' and 'O God of Bethel, by whose hand.' But I will refer here to his love-letters, his visions, and his one biography. Doddridge's first courtship failed; the lady, besides being a coquette, may have looked for a less judicious suitor; for he writes (misjudging her feeling) that

> rational esteem and friendship has by gentle degrees improved into love, under the approbation of reason; and, if you will permit me to be grave for a moment, of religion too.

But in his letters to the lady he married Doddridge remains a lover to the end, signing himself 'my dearest love, securely and entirely yours,' and also, in mannerly fashion, 'my dearest, your most cordial, obliged, and faithful humble servant.' Also he tells her how one day, being in a devout muse, he had had 'most sensible prelibations of heaven.' And Doddridge saw the Grail. To another friend he describes how in a dream an angel took him up into a heavenly palace, where he saw 'a golden cup, which stood upon a table'; and on this cup was the 'figure of a vine bearing grapes.' Christ then entered, drank of the cup, and bade the unwilling dreamer drink next. Then, looking about him, Doddridge, in an 'ecstasy,' saw that the room was hung with pictured scenes of his own life.

Like most of his persuasion he was a stout Whig, and was active in 1745 in raising volunteers. His most spirited book, *Some Remarkable Passages in the Life of Col. James Gardiner* (1747), chronicles the life and death of a warrior who was also a prize convert, having been formerly a somewhat notorious rip.

But the biographer knows little of 'the gayest part of his life, and the most criminal,' and hastens to the crisis. One day, whilst waiting for a married lady, Gardiner took up Thomas Watson's *Christian Soldier*, was convinced of sin, and abandoned his assignation. Afterwards he had a blinding vision, which he refused to think could have been a dream :

> before him, as it were suspended in the air, a visible representation of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross, surrounded on all sides with a glory.

After a long struggle Gardiner received assurance of pardon, and became in turn a converter of others. But he remained a soldier ; and at Prestonpans he took charge of a captainless party, and held on ; was shot, but held on still ; and was at last finished by a Highlander's cutlass. The level style of Doddridge warms to this occasion ; and the whole story shows, once more, the far-reaching power of the evangelical movement. It is quoted by Scott ; and the 'singular and mystical circumstance' of Gardiner's conversion 'gave him,' we hear, 'a peculiar and solemn interest in the eyes of the young soldier,' Edward Waverley.

CHAPTER XIX

SOME POLITICAL WRITERS

I

By 1730 so many of the best authors had been drawn into the party fray that the new prose had become a shining and efficient weapon of offence. Even Addison and Berkeley had not kept apart, and still less the impetuous Steele. But such disputation was not their true line; and the master-debater had been Swift. In his *Examiner* he carried political journalism to a higher point than Defoe, its real founder, had done in the *Review*. Swift's tracts and chronicles are spread over many years; the *Modest Proposal* and the *Four Last Years of Queen Anne*, both printed in 1729, reveal him in his full strength; and even *Gulliver* had been, in part, a Tory pamphlet. He had no worthy successor in his own style; but his friend Arbuthnot's *History of John Bull* had shown prophetically, like the *Drapier's Letters*, how the art of satire could be strengthened, and its forms enlarged, by the stimulus of politics. Below such writing, which survives as literature, is a vast sunken mass that concerns only the historical digger or the bibliographer. Throughout the century some of the greater men of letters, Fielding and Johnson, deviate into controversy, and find that it is not their calling. Party feeling colours the records of Walpole and exasperates the verse of Churchill. In all this there is little of the insight or statesmanship that often strike us in Chesterfield. There is rich compensation in Burke, who will occupy much of this chapter. I shall touch on hardly any other political writers except the two great and famous combatants of the age; and the first of these, who links it with the age preceding, is Bolingbroke.

II

The share of Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke [1] (1678-1751) in making and marring history lies outside our record; and half of his public career falls within the reigns of Anne and George the First. His position, whether as a political thinker

or as a man of letters, is equivocal and hard to define. He wrote much, and he has a magnificent manner; often he *is* a magnificent manner and no more. We all know how a musical and powerful voice which charms our hearing may leave no trace at all upon the mind. Style has been called the dress, or better the incarnation, of thought; and Bolingbroke often provokes the ancient question whether an undeniable style can exist, of which the thought cannot be undressed, or disembodied, without dismal results. But this is to be metaphysical. And Bolingbroke's admirers need not fall back, as their last defence, upon his eloquence. Form can never be quite empty, after all; nor is it possible that a man of such calibre, with such a chronicle, and with such a tongue, should concern only the political historian. It is the joy of the critic not to be discouraged by appearances; and we are sure that if Bolingbroke has anything to say he will say it well. Reconnoitring, we can find in him some remarkable notes on statecraft, some admirable portraits and pieces of narrative, and some classical specimens of sarcasm and invective. Then there is his curious and unique pose, which calls for study; and behind it, if they can ever be reached, the true features of the man. Bolingbroke's style offers yet other problems; and indeed the whole inquiry is elusive.

When David Mallet published his works in 1754, he was already something of a classic *manqué*; and such he has remained. His character was rightfully distrusted; most of his political ideas, as well as his polite version of deism (Ch. XVIII.), were out of date. Soon after his fall and flight to France he had published his *Reflections on Exile* (1716), with its borrowings from Seneca and its air of injured virtue and philosophic calm. His powers are first evident in the *Letter to Sir William Windham*, written at this time but not printed till 1753; and like all his best writing, it has the stamp of oratory. Bolingbroke had been the most applauded speaker of his time. His tracts are meant to be speeches, and Roman speeches, and seem to be hurled at rows of sullen and discomfited opponents. He was steeped in Cicero; and the classics, together with his experience in Parliament, determine the form and cadence of his prose. The *Letter*, Bolingbroke's *apologia*, explains why he had joined and then quitted the Pretender; how his old friends, the high Tories, were unthankful and fickle; and how ill his former partner, Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, had behaved. No one would trust his story; but the pictures of the Jacobite court have the value of memoirs and the force of first-rate

satire. A familiar passage, 'Care and hope sat on every busy Irish face,' discloses a new kind of irony, unlike that of Swift or Fielding, insolent, patrician, and bitterly urbane. During this time of eclipse Bolingbroke began to set down, though not to publish, his religious opinions. In 1723 he was allowed to come home, though not to sit in the Lords ; and he was still under his attainder. Settled at Dawley, he renewed his characteristic double life of literary *grand seigneur* and political operator.

For thirteen years he wrote incessantly, and to this period belongs his closer intimacy with Pope. In his letters the pose of detachment, martyrdom, and recluse tranquillity is always maintained. But from 1726 onwards he was controlling and largely writing the *Craftsman*,[1] the organ of the Opposition, of which, intellectually, he was the driving power. Of this journal, which made up in wit and vigour what it wanted in scruple, the nominal editor was 'Mr. Caleb D'Anvers,' otherwise Nicholas Amhurst, already known for his impudent sheet *Terrae-Filius* (Ch. IV.). Bolingbroke's *Remarks on the History of England* and his much more solid *Dissertation on Parties* (1733) originally came out in the *Craftsman* ; and likewise the brilliant apologue, the *First Vision of Camilick*, wherein Walpole is represented with his bags of gold and his kow-towing henchmen. For the time the campaign failed ; and, what was worse, Bolingbroke got nothing for himself. In 1735 he again retreated to France, and proceeded to describe the *True Uses of Retirement*.

III

The *Remarks*, which begin with the Anglo-Saxons, and scamper down through the centuries, are in effect a pamphlet against the minister. Elizabeth, it is suggested, cherished the glory of England in a different spirit from Sir Robert. Later comes a fling at the 'mercenary and abandoned wretches who have dared to plead for a dependence of the parliament upon the crown.' A sample of Bolingbroke's invective may be given. It is, I think, better than that of Junius, being less balanced and mechanical, and just as fierce, but less viperish ; or let the reader judge :

> But let us ask, on this occasion, what you are, who thus presume to threaten ?—Are you not one, whose measure of folly and iniquity is full ; who can neither hold, nor quit, his power with impunity ; and over whose head the long-gathering cloud of national vengeance is ready to burst ?—Is it not time for you, sir, instead of threatening to attack others, to consider how soon you may be attacked your-

self ?—How many crimes may be charged upon you and yours, which almost every man can prove ; and how many more are ready to start into light, as soon as the power, by which you now conceal them, shall determine ?—When next you meditate revenge on your adversaries, remember this truth: the laws must be destroyed before they can suffer, or you escape.

In the *Dissertation* Bolingbroke is still grinding the same axe ; but he is now dealing with more recent history, and quoting his own experience. His analysis of the terms Whig and Tory and of the changes in their meaning since Revolution times is acute ; and his attack on the extreme conception of the royal prerogative is in a close and heightened style which must surely have supplied a pattern to Burke :

If a divine, indefeasible, hereditary right to govern a community, be once acknowledged ; a right independent of the community, and which vests in every successive prince immediately on the death of his predecessor, and previously to any engagement taken towards the people ; if the people at once acknowledge themselves bound to such princes by ties of passive obedience and non-resistance, by an allegiance unconditional and not reciprocal to protection [*sic*]; if a kind of oral law, or mysterious cabbala, which pharisees of the black gown and the long robe are always ready to interpret as a prince desires, be once added, like a supplemental code, to the known laws of the land : then, I say, such princes have the power, if not the right, given them of commencing tyrants ; and princes who have the power are prone to think that they have the right.

The Commons, it is added, must also be secured against corruption ; and Bolingbroke inveighs in his loftiest style against the misuse of the public purse.

The discourse *Of the Study of History*, written in 1735 and posthumously published, preaches that history is ' philosophy teaching by examples ' : a saying that the author has read ' somewhere or other in Dionysius of Halicarnassus.' He regards the study as mainly a school for the politician ; and for mere learning he has the fatal contempt that distinguished his set. To Bolingbroke, faithful to the Scriblerus Club, learning is pure dryasdust. One of the liveliest pictures is that of the man with a long memory, who reads so much that he never thinks ; and it may be quoted to illustrate Bolingbroke's contemptuous wit :

In the course of my acquaintance with him I consulted him once or twice, not oftener ; for I found this mass of learning of as little use to me as to the owner. The man was communicative enough ;

but nothing was distinct in his mind. How could it be otherwise? He had never spared time to think; all was employed in reading. His reason had not the merit of common mechanism. When you press a watch or pull a clock, they answer your question with precision, or they repeat exactly the hour of the day, and tell you neither more nor less than you desire to know. But when you asked this man a question, he overwhelmed you by pouring forth all that the several terms or words of your question recalled to his memory; and if he omitted anything, it was that very thing to which the sense of the whole question should have led and confined him. To ask him a question was to wind up a spring in his mechanism, that rattled on with vast rapidity and confused noise, till the force of it was spent; and you went away with all the noise in your ears, stunned and uninformed. I never left him that I was not ready to say to him, *Dieu vous fasse la grâce de devenir moins savant!* a wish that La Mothe le Vayer mentions upon some occasion or other, and that he would have done well to apply to himself upon many.

Here, once more, we learn that the author's true life is the life of books and thought; and with his usual artistry he gently admits, only to excuse, the turmoil of his past years:

but my Genius, like the demon of Socrates, whispered so softly that very often I heeded him not, in the hurry of those passions by which I was transported. Some calmer hours there were; in them I hearkened to him. Reflection had often its turn, and the love of study and the desire of knowledge have never quite abandoned me.

Still, the hermit was keeping a sharp eye upon home affairs; and in 1736 he wrote his *Letter on the Spirit of Patriotism*. His disappointment breathes through it. The dissident Whigs and baffled high Tories had failed to unite into the Opposition of his dreams. There is a picture of the true patriot, who, if he succeeds in his aim, 'enjoys a pleasure like to that which is attributed to the Supreme Being on a survey of His works.' This is humbug on the grand scale, and beside it all Pecksniffery and *tartuferie* sink into mere literature. And yet when, in the same letter, Bolingbroke turns to his classics, discusses his own art of oratory, and praises Demosthenes and Cicero, he catches their accent for a moment, and we feel that his enthusiasm is genuine.

Neither this tract nor the *Idea of a Patriot King* was printed till 1749; but the latter work had been written in 1738, after the queen's death, when the omens seemed to be declaring against Walpole. Bolingbroke was now home again, and again machinating. But the fall of the minister in 1742 made

no apparent difference in the regime ; and the two ' patriot ' manifestoes were held back. Frederick Prince of Wales, whom Bolingbroke cannot have taken seriously save as a matter of tactics, was to die in the same year as himself ; and, as is well known, the young prince, afterwards George the Third, was brought up on the supposed tenets of the *Patriot King*. I say supposed ; for George and his teachers only took from them what they wanted, namely the conception of the royal prerogative, without the checks that Bolingbroke suggested, or the larger ideas involved. Certainly, he never thinks out his ' idea,' but hides it under a splendid display of language. It has been called a ' fabric of sand,' and so, at the time, it proved to be. But the ' idea ' re-formed itself, somehow, in the brain of Disraeli, who avowed his debt to the book. Bolingbroke, in fact, is here at his best as a political thinker. His vision of the national policy has a very modern aspect. The interests of this island are peace, and trade, and amity with neighbours, and the maintenance of those blessings by a sufficient but not oppressive force. The ruler is to be hereditary and above party ; there is to be one party composed of the best men of all parties and controlled by the king ; and this ' free monarchy ' is the true bulwark against corruption. It is, however, limited by the consideration of the general good :

> *Limitations* on a crown ought to be carried *as far* as it is necessary to secure the liberties of a people ; and all *such limitations* may subsist, without weakening or endangering monarchy.

We need not deny the beauty or the sincerity of the peroration. ' Civil fury ' will vanish, and

> In his place, concord will appear, brooding peace and prosperity on the happy land ; joy sitting in every face, content in every heart ; a people unoppressed, undisturbed, unalarmed ; busy to improve their private property and the public stock ; fleets covering the ocean ; bringing home wealth by the returns of industry ; carrying assistance or terror abroad by the direction of wisdom ; and asserting triumphantly the right and the honour of Great Britain, as far as waters roll and as winds can waft them.

Bolingbroke's ' idea ' of a single party was controverted by Burke, and has remained foreign to the English temper and to our political structure ; but some of his tenets, like the continuity of foreign policy, have come to be accepted. It is here that he ceases to be merely a politician or a personage, and shows himself a statesman.

IV

Of all the *forgotten* styles in the language, Bolingbroke's is probably the most remarkable. He is a perfect skater, graceful without effort, cutting intricate figures on the thinnest of ice. He has often so little to say that his formal skill makes him doubly tedious. But the quotations will have given some idea of his powers as an executant. His ear is delicate ; the subtlety, as well as the large easy flight, of his rhythm is pervading. Scan his best sentences, and their melody, the cunning arrangement of the stresses, is heard at once :

asserting | triúmphantly | the ríght | and the hónour | of Greát | Brítain, || as fár | as wáters | róll | and as wínds | can wáft them | .

A common craftsman would have set a *the* before the winds and waters, spoiling the cadence. The monotony is here escaped, which besets some of Bolingbroke's harmonious verbiage. His English, though not always careful, is on the whole of the best mintage ; neither too learned, nor too low ; leaning to elaboration and balance, yet not mechanically symmetrical. Bolingbroke would have rejected, as a false literary manner, the style of *Rasselas*. Probably he owed most to the study of Cicero, the Cicero of the familiar letters as well as of the speeches. His influence on prose is easier to feel than to specify. So great a virtuoso was sure to leave his mark. He stands at the source of the modern periodic style, which is surer and more accurate than that of the seventeenth century, if inferior in grandeur. No one of his own time competes with Bolingbroke in this respect, unless it be Berkeley. Addison has no such complexity of structure, and the natural manner of Swift is at the opposite pole. Yet Bolingbroke did not, like Johnson, found a distinct school. Burke studied him closely, and in the *Vindication of Natural Society* tried, though imperfectly, to reproduce his style. For those long yet closely packed and lucid sentences, interspersed with sharp and short ones, and for those figures, and ironical questions, and sudden appeals, of which Burke is a master, Bolingbroke furnished the nearest and most splendid model. Yet there is hardly a sentence of Burke's that could be mistaken for Bolingbroke's. Burke never attained to the native ease and harmony of his predecessor. Another student of Bolingbroke's more obvious oratorical devices was Junius ; but Junius could not emulate his variety, or his inborn air of superiority. The debt of Gibbon can hardly be questioned,

though it is not very tangible. It was from Pascal, he says, that he 'learned to manage the weapon of grave and temperate irony.' He, like Bolingbroke, is sceptical and anti-clerical. Both are careful to avoid violence or jar of sound. Much of the likeness may be due to their common study of Latin. But Gibbon, of course, had read Bolingbroke; and no intervening writer is their rival in the continuous and periodic style.

Bolingbroke deserves a full anthology, which should include some of his letters. His gentler side is seen in those addressed to his half-sister Henrietta, the wife of Robert Knight, afterwards Lord Luxborough; and, above all, in one which he wrote to the young Lord Marchmont after the death of Sir William Windham. The words reveal not only his lifelong aversion to the churches, but also something of his heart, and of the philosophy with which he came to console or to deceive it:

> I can contribute nothing, my dear Marchmont—thus I used to speak to Windham,—thus let me speak to you—I can contribute nothing to alleviate your grief, unless mingling my tears with yours can contribute to it; I feel the whole weight it; I am pleased to feel it; I should despise myself if I felt it less. We are men; and time will have its effects on our pains, as it has on our pleasures, for this is a mechanical effect; but all the philosophy of the Portic [*sic*] could not produce the same in you or me. We have sentiments, affections, passions, as well as reason; and we leave them to govern in their several provinces. How impertinent is it to combat grief with syllogism! and how little need has that mind of consolation, who can find it in philosophical lectures! but your grief and mine are nourished and strengthened by every reasonable reflection. . . .
>
> . . . The honest country parson will advance, that Windham's death at this critical conjuncture is a stroke of that scourge of God, which is lifted up to punish a corrupt and profligate people. He will see the hand of God in it; so will a bishop too, if he waits for a translation; but then he will add this to a long catalogue of other providences, by which the Supreme Being has conducted Robin and Horace Walpole into absolute power, and maintained them in it. All this, my Lord, is blasphemous, and not to be heard without horror by every man, who has thought himself into religion.

V

Burke,[1] in 1770, while speaking on the powers of the Attorney-General to deal with libels, pointed out how the greatest of all libellers had eluded the law. The notable thirty-fifth letter of Junius [2] to the King, though nearly a year old, was still fresh in mind. Burke, with much address, while most respectful in his

language, does not hide his satisfaction over the letter ; and the passage though a lengthy one may be quoted, since it recovers for us, even better than the *Letters* of Junius himself, the passions of the moment and the stir caused by the unknown sharp-shooter :

Where then, sir, shall we look for the origin of this relaxation of the laws and of all government ? How comes this Junius to have broke through the cobwebs of the law and to range uncontrolled, unpunished, through the land ? The myrmidons of the court have long been, and are still, pursuing him in vain. They will not spend their time upon me, or you, or you ; no ; they disdain such vermin when the mighty boar of the forest, that has broke through all their toils, is before them. But what will all their efforts avail ? No sooner has he wounded one, than he lays down another dead at his feet. For my part, when I saw his attack upon the King, I own my blood ran cold. I thought he had ventured too far, and that there was an end of his triumphs. Not that he had not asserted many truths. Yes, sir, there were in that composition many bold truths by which a wise prince might profit. It was the rancour and venom with which I was struck. In these respects the *North Briton* is as much inferior to him as in wit, strength, and judgment. But while I expected from this daring flight his final ruin and fall, behold him rising still higher, and coming down souse upon both houses of parliament. Yes, he did make you his quarry, and you still bleed from the wounds of his talons. You crouched, and still crouch, beneath his rage. . . . King, Lords, and Commons are but sport for his fury.

This is in Burke's full-blooded debating manner, and it cannot be thought to give his whole mind about Junius. There was an obstinate legend, which he was at last compelled to deny in form, that he was himself Junius. Burke must often have thought, like his biographer Lord Morley, that Junius, even if he were often in the right, was a 'third-rate railer.' Certainly Junius can be currish in the extreme. When he taunts the Duke of Grafton, in the tone of Shakespeare's Thersites, with his relations to Ann Parsons, when he reviles Lord Mansfield, and when he accuses John Horne but is silent when challenged for his evidence, he is no better than what used to be termed, with a peculiar intonation, a *fellow*. But there is more in Junius than this ; and he is not remarkable only for his style. It is true that, as Horne observed, *materiam superabat opus*. The workmanship is doubtless far too good for the matter. But Junius, though incapable of scruple in debate, without the least tincture of high philosophy, and a defender of some abuses, has a firm hold on the better Whig gospel and expounds it by no means

ignobly. His advice to the headlong Wilkes, in his private letters, is temperate and sound. Some of his sentences even suggest that, according to his lights, he had profited by reading Burke :

> Human affairs are in no instance governed by strict positive right. If change of circumstances were to have no weight in directing our conduct and opinions, the mutual intercourse of mankind would be nothing more than a contention between positive and equitable right. Society would be a state of war, and law itself would be injustice.

We are much reminded of Burke's doctrine of the higher 'expediency.' And Junius, though too seldom, can rise to an eloquence of his own. He can praise well ; his tone softens when he speaks of George Grenville ; and when he appeals to Camden, he exclaims :

> I turn with pleasure from that barren waste in which no salutary plant takes root, no verdure quickens, to a character fertile, as I willingly believe, in every great and good qualification.

And he is fired by the protest of the City against the maltreatment of Wilkes :

> The noble spirit of the metropolis is the life-blood of the state, collected at the heart ; from that point it circulates, with health and vigour, through every artery of the constitution.

New evidence has come out since Macaulay wrote his essay, in 1841, upon Warren Hastings ; but his sketch of Junius has hardly been improved upon :

> He was clearly a man not destitute of real patriotism and magnanimity, a man whose vices were not of a sordid kind. But he must have been a man in the highest degree arrogant and insolent, a man prone to malevolence, and prone to error of mistaking his malevolence for public virtue. . . . No man is so merciless as he who, under a strong self-delusion, confounds his antipathies with his duties.

VI

The sixty-nine *Letters of Junius*, rightly so called, appeared in the *Public Advertiser* of Henry Sampson Woodfall from January 1769 to January 1772, thus covering most of the tenure of the Grafton ministry and the first years of Lord North's. The authorised collection appeared in 1772. There are also many

'miscellaneous letters,' often of most doubtful origin. Further, there are unquestioned private letters of Junius to his publisher, to Wilkes, to Grenville, and to other persons. He failed in his direct objects, for Lord North was too firmly seated; but he continued to attack various enemies under various signatures. Meantime he had inflamed public opinion, and had left the world a minor classic and an unsolved riddle.

His principal victims are Sir William Draper, the Duke of Grafton, the Duke of Bedford, Sir William Blackstone, Lord Mansfield, the King, and the Earl of Hillsborough, secretary for America; but his utmost venom is reserved for the two Dukes and for the great judge. Junius has many resemblances to Pope. He too stores his malice, and waits and ruminates until at last he finds the fatal phrase. The 'reputed ancestors' of Grafton, we hear, 'left no distressing examples of virtue, even to their legitimate posterity'; and had he been content merely to bribe like Walpole, he might 'even have been despised with moderation.' Blackstone, again, 'recollected that he had a place to preserve, though he forgot that he had a reputation to lose.' Mr. Rigby 'violates his second nature, and blushes whenever he speaks of you' (of Grafton). And Gibbon (who favours this usage of the word *some*) may well have studied the jeer at Mansfield, of whom it was fabled that he had once knelt down to drink the health of the Pretender:

> Your zeal in the cause of an unhappy prince was expressed with the sincerities of wine, and some of the solemnities of religion.

The *Letters* are full of these hornet stings; but in the thirty-fifth, the gravest and most highly burnished of all, there are higher qualities. It is addressed to the king, and ends with the threat that the crown which 'has been acquired by one revolution, may be lost by another.' But Junius does not seem to have had much hatred to spare for George, and some of the compliments may be sincere, not merely ironical or politic. Probably George would have preferred his hatred to his insolence.

It is part of his game not always to write too carefully. The letters signed 'Philo-Junius' are often purposely loose in form; and many of the 'miscellaneous ones,' even though assignable to Junius, are poorer still. He tells us that Philo-Junius was invented to 'explain particular passages,' in answer to critics. But over his full-dress compositions he took, again like Pope, prodigious pains. Such is the dedication of the collected series 'to the English nation.' We may wonder, as Jeffrey did of

Macaulay, where he 'got that style.' All three writers are in the same tradition, of what may be called censorious prose; and Macaulay, at any rate, though otherwise above comparison with Junius, reminds us of him when both are in a bad temper. The manner, in fact, is the expression of a certain mental attitude. It expresses a completely armoured self-assurance, and a disregard of shades and delicacies. The sentences are sharply cut, unqualified, and usually short, with an air of finality. They are built up, and arrayed oratorically, with a perfect mastery of balance and contrast, and with many an indignant, self-answered question on the way; and they move always to a climax. Junius marks a stage of achievement in prose of this order. He does not derive from Swift or the older pamphleteers. He seems, as remarked above, to have made some study of Bolingbroke. But his native gift, bettered by incessant practice, almost earns him the title of being the founder of a style. The purity of his diction and idiom, which are of the higher eighteenth-century stamp, is remarkable. Nor does he merely argue and revile. Junius has a decided turn for narrative. His accounts of the affair of the Falkland Islands, and of the illegal rescue of Major-General Gansell in the Tilt-yard, are admirably rapid; and here, again, we think for a moment of Macaulay.

VII

For the history of letters the style of Junius and its origins are of more interest than the question of his identity. The mystery was, of course, and has remained, a great part of his capital. In 1768 he wrote to Grenville:[1]

> No man living knows, or even suspects, the author. I have no connection with any parties except a voluntary attachment to *your* cause and person. It began with amusement, grew into habit, was confirmed by a close attention to your principles and conduct, and is now heated into passion.

The 'attachment' was genuine, but it was by no means the writer's only motive. Personal rancour, patriotism, and theatric sense, all intermingled, played their part. He said that he wished 'to write for fame, and to be unknown.' I have nothing fresh to contribute to the ancient question, Who was Junius? It is still one of circumstantial evidence, and has produced a small literature. Positive proof has never been forthcoming, though it is often said that many a criminal has

been hanged on slighter testimony. The weight of expert opinion still favours the candidature of Sir Philip Francis (1740-1818), at the time the first clerk in the War Office, and afterwards best known as an Indian statesman and the adversary of Hastings. The proofs adduced are both external and internal, and are too intricate to rehearse here. They amount to a string of almost overwhelming coincidences. They turn partly on dates, partly on the opportunities of Francis to know what Junius knew, partly on handwriting, partly on the behaviour of Francis when taxed with the authorship, and partly on likenesses of temper and character. It is commonly held that Francis may have had associates in the enterprise, among whom is mentioned the elder John Calcraft. If Francis is not Junius, we must suppose him in alliance with some elusive twin, who corresponds to no known writer of the time. It has often been objected that the admitted works of Francis show little capacity to use the pen of Junius. To this Macaulay pointedly replies that Junius himself was an unequal writer, and that there may well be a great gap between the better and the meaner work of the same man. This argument, perhaps, admits of being strengthened. The style of Junius is *personated*, and essentially a thing of artifice ; and the gulf between the assumed and the avowed manner of an author may be wide indeed. Some analogy is offered by the feat—however different in character—of the late William Sharp, who figured as ' Fiona Macleod ' ; and, even more, by the leading case of James Macpherson. Nor is the gulf so great as has been assumed. Verbal echoes of Junius that have been detected in the prose of Francis may be explained away as imitation or unconscious quotation. But a fragment of autobiography, written about 1776, and another on the ' characters ' of the Kings of England, disclose a style which could easily be intensified, or heated, into that of Junius. Francis writes, of Henry Fox and Calcraft :

> There was not virtue enough in either of them to justify their quarrelling. If either of them had had common honesty he could never have been the friend of the other. . . . The question between these virtuous men was how far honour was to yield to or prevail over gratitude.

Francis speaks, in the same acrimonious and finished manner, of the *Decline and Fall* as ' a journey over a desert endless *in transitu* and immediately forgotten.' Probably he could adopt it whenever he chose ; although it does not always suit his purpose. His speeches on the Mahratta war are solid, and his

letters to his friends can be easy and playful. Some responsible critics, however, have rejected the 'Franciscan theory' or held it doubtful. The reader must be referred to other books if he would study the particulars, or would learn of the forty or fifty names that have been offered as alternatives. They include Lord Chatham, Gibbon, and Horace Walpole; but this belongs to the history of crazes.

VIII

Apart from Blackstone, who will be mentioned later, no political thinker of mark appeared during the eighteen years between the death of Bolingbroke and the *Observations* of Burke. Hume had written his *History of England* (1754-1762); and his political essays had come out long before. But his sceptical Toryism was now intensified; and no one had arisen to requicken, and exalt above itself, the body of old Whig doctrine. This, and much more, was to be done by Burke, whose stature as a man and a writer, when every deduction has been made, seems only to grow with time.

Edmund Burke [1] (1729-1797) stands as far above the disputants of his day as Hooker stands above the mob who are described by Hallam as 'caitiff brawlers.' There have been greater statesmen, and a thousand more effective politicians. Some of the masters of our prose have commanded, hardly a nobler, but certainly a purer and less troubled style. Yet Burke, if we think of him as at once a public man, a patriot, an orator, and an author, is acknowledged to be unique. He was for long the brain of a party that failed, and a champion of causes that seemed to be lost. But his judgment on many great affairs has been confirmed by time; and in his old age, when his influence was thought to be spent, he was recognised as a prophet whose omens had come true and as a moulder of European opinion. All his utterances, whether on the nature of party, on economy, on religious toleration, on Ireland, on America, on India, on France, or on Whiggism, are bound together by a peculiar political creed, which retains a living interest. It is expressly elastic and based on the higher 'expediency'; it is not reduced to a formal system; but it sets forth a stable, and a fairly well definable, set of principles. Burke's true territory is the quaking ground that lies between ethics and politics; and in this he has planted solid landmarks. The vice of the moral theorist is to be divorced from facts; the vice of the politician is to be divorced from thought, and often

from morality. And some of the strongest minds, Machiavelli, Bacon, and Hobbes, that have applied themselves to statecraft have as good as thrown over morality in any intelligible sense of the term. It is known, too, how Carlyle floundered when he tried to reconcile his cult of the Eternities with his cult of Frederick. Perhaps the discord is not resoluble; but Burke, at any rate, though he cared little for verbal consistency, kept his faith in a solution, and refused to be either a mere speculator or what is now called a 'realist.' He was also a great writer; and the body of doctrine which he has left retains its identity through his power of language.

Burke's fierce aversion to 'metaphysics,' or 'abstract principles,' becomes at times almost a mania. He refuses to methodise his ideas, or to think backwards, beyond a certain point, for fear of losing his hold on the realities. His point of view is not that of Aristotle, of the natural historian who is not content till he has reduced all the phenomena to a few ultimate laws. He waves away the question whether England had a *right* to tax the colonies. He is equally distrustful of the theoretical 'rights of man.' He does analyse that idea, but not very satisfactorily, and as if under protest; he is really concerned with the practical effects, in his eyes disastrous, of misinterpreting it. His strength lies, like Bacon's, in the sphere of what Bacon calls 'middle axioms.' Burke's power of coining them has not been excelled, and many of them have sunk into the English mind:

'Liberty must be limited in order to be possessed.'—'Liberty, when men act in bodies, is *Power*.'—'It is not, what a lawyer tells me I *may* do . . .'—'Legislators ought to do what lawyers cannot: for they have no other rules to bind them, but the great principles of reason and equity, and the general sense of mankind.'—'I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people.'—'When we marry, the choice is voluntary, but the duties are not matter of choice.'—'Society . . . becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born.'

It would be easy to enlarge this sheaf, and collections have been made of Burke's 'wit and wisdom.' But his sayings are never merely *pensées*, or what in his time were called 'detached thoughts'; they spring always out of a living argument, and must be judged in each case by the circumstances. Burke's most continuous piece of general reasoning is to be found in the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* (1791); it is, for once, 'abstract'; he is endeavouring to bring out the underlying

harmony between the views he had expressed at different times of his life. In an earlier *apologia*, the *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol* (1777), there is a similar intention. But these were writings, not speeches ; and in Burke's speeches the maxims are disposed at due intervals in order to rivet a point or to clinch a period. There is the constant effort at once to keep a grip on the issue before the house and to raise it into ' a larger ether, a diviner air.' This double purpose Burke achieves, beyond all other English political writers. His range and fertility of mind, and his mass of actual information, always at command, and always in perfect order, supply the driving power to his general aphorisms and his appeals to principle.

Goldsmith's lines in *Retaliation* have done something to mislead posterity. There are many unquestionable tributes to Burke's immediate power as an orator. He had some physical disadvantages, and he came, at certain periods, to speak too long, too often, too violently, and also too wisely for his audience. And, in order to make them listen, he was capable of indulging in a harsh and depressing form of humour, and in really detestable imagery. But these excesses recall the words of the old Greek critic who compares the work of a smaller and more finished performer with that of Demosthenes :

> We do not think that little lamp which *we* kindle more remarkable than the craters of Etna in eruption, whose abysses fling up whole mountains of rock and pour forth streams of that earth-begotten and essential flame.

Burke's speeches have not died the usual death of parliamentary eloquence. The greatest of them he published himself ; and from the imperfect reports which remain of many more we can divine our loss. There are also his books, which were not speeches, but which bear so plainly the stamp of oratory ; for his genius needed the stimulus of a real or an imaginary audience, preferably hostile.

IX

More is now known than of old about Burke's youth and boyhood. His doings and writings as a collegian [1] at Trinity, Dublin, have been unearthed. His early letters to his friend Richard Shackleton are gay, and ebullient, and not otherwise very striking. But, at the age of about nineteen, he is found conducting a Dublin print, the *Reformer*, in which we begin to recognise the hand. He writes on poetry and the drama ; denounces, in an edifying way, the morals of Restoration and

Revolution comedy ; and, not less, the sentimental or 'weeping comedy' that succeeded it. Of Edward Moore's *Foundling* he observes, not too severely, that it is

> an innocent and well-meant piece, but partakes so little of the *vis comica* that to call it a comedy would be debasing the name.

He likes the Elizabethans ; says a good word for Beaumont and Fletcher ; and of Shakespeare, that the 'parts which in another man might be increased with labour and study, were in him the absolute gift of heaven.' We know how the words of the poet were to haunt Burke's great orations. Late in life he told Laurence that his interest in abstract and speculative themes had been keenest in his college days ; and it is likely that he then began to put together his notes on the *Sublime and Beautiful*, a work which in his maturity he always declined to revise. His mind, indeed, had already taken another ply. In the *Reformer* there are passages upon prosperous absentee landlords ; and there is a deeply felt, and highly charged, picture of the miseries of the Irish peasant. Such inequalities, he remarks, are 'a kind of blasphemy upon providence' : it is a phrase that shows the lion's claw.

The *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Burke's one essay on aesthetic, is seldom duly valued. It is true that its psychology is roughly adapted from Locke, and is not really required by the argument ; and that the account of beauty, which is traced down to ideas of smallness, softness, smoothness, and weakness, is slightly ludicrous. Burke often finds unsatisfactory names for the things that he admires ; but forget the names, and consider the things themselves, and his freshness and independence are seen at once. He was opening new ground ; he owed little or nothing to Addison's papers in the *Spectator* on the imagination. His descriptions of the symptoms of love and bodily pain are from the life ; and his pages on the 'sublime' throw much light on his own oratory. Homer, Lucretius, Virgil, the Book of Job, the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, Shakespeare, and Milton supply his best examples. His theory is based, at any rate, on a study of the highest literature. There was little, indeed, on which he could draw in the verse of his day. The longer odes of Gray were not yet printed, and the bastard-sublime of the *Night Thoughts* could not serve. Burke is attracted to great poetry of a special kind, and is trying to explain why it has stirred him. 'A mode of terror or pain is always a cause of the sublime.' Among these modes, or causes,

are the sense of physical darkness; of vastness; of magnificence; and of difficulty overcome. Examples are Milton's Hell; the idea of God; Stonehenge. Profusion and splendour of imagery also suggest the sublime; and hardly at any other point does Burke's idea of the quality approach that of the critic whom we know as Longinus. All this accords with his own genius. We think of the figures of tornado and pestilence, of the cloud and the meteor, in the speech *On the Nabob of Arcot's Debts*, or of the picture of the severing ocean in the speech *On Conciliation*. And the discussion of 'the effects of sympathy in the distresses of others' and of the 'effects of tragedy' seems to be the earliest in the language in which the great question is fairly opened, Why does the representation of pain give pleasure? 'We have a degree of delight, and that no small one, in the real misfortunes and pains of others.' 'Terror is a passion which always produces delight when it does not press too close.'

As a political thinker, Burke opened a masked fire in his *Vindication of Natural Society*. It purported to be the work of 'a late noble writer,' namely Bolingbroke, whose ideas are travestied, and whose style is imitated. Some good judges, we hear, were deceived. The fume raised by Mallet's edition of two years before still hung in the air; and no one knew what fresh heresies the noble writer might not have left in manuscript. Here, perhaps, he was again a ghost with the old Ciceronian gestures, pouring out the old musical sentences, and seeking now to undermine society as well as the faith. Burke, in a second edition, signed his name and explained his object; it had been to show that

> the same engines which were employed for the destruction of religion might be employed with equal success for the subversion of government.

He further laments that the reader would not find in the work 'that rapid current of overbearing and impetuous imagery' for which Bolingbroke was 'justly admired.'

In fact the mimicry, though specious, was imperfect. Bolingbroke is made to say, not what he would ever have said, but what in Burke's opinion followed from what he *had* said; and the surge of Burke's own eloquence is to be heard more than once. A grim picture is drawn of the evils of all government, whether kingly, aristocratic, democratic, or 'mixed'; of the millions destroyed by war; of the sufferers in mines and parasitic trades; of the tyrannies of the law, and of the grinding down

of the poor. But these are just the evils that moved Burke himself; he honestly takes fire in stating them; he believes in most of the facts on which he pretends that the 'noble writer' is building; and all he denies is the desperate inference, that they are due to the existence of that 'artificial' product, the social state. There is nothing as yet to show how Burke himself thought the evils should be met. Everything points, if not to a real confusion in his mind, still to his not having faced the issue. John, afterwards Lord, Morley pointed out half a century ago that Rousseau had been saying in earnest some of the things that Bolingbroke is here supposed to say, and that some of his utterances are 'easily interchangeable with passages in the *Vindication*.' But Burke shows no sign of knowing this. It is notable that the sentence, quoted above, about the 'same engines' would be an excellent text for his discourses delivered a generation later against the Jacobins. I have already noticed the possible debt of Burke's prose to that of Bolingbroke.

X

About this time Burke set his hand as a reviser to an anonymous *Account of the European Settlements in America* (1757). William Burke,[1] his ally (and possibly his kinsman), is supposed to have been the author of this well-written compilation, which contains a sketch of both Americas and of the West Indies. We can only guess; but the mind, if not the hand, of Edmund Burke, and even his peculiar rhythm, surely leave their mark on many passages. To 'vilify and traduce the French nation' is described as a 'low and illiberal way of thinking'; and the writer adds that 'our business is to fight against Alexander, not to rail at him,' seeing that

> we have been engaged for above a century with France in a noble contention for the superiority in arms, in politics, in learning, and in commerce.

And the ring of another sentence is hardly to be mistaken:

> Foreign politics have something more splendid and entertaining than domestic prudence; but this latter is ever attended, with less glaring, yet with infinitely more solid, secure, and lasting advantages. The great point of our regard in America ought therefore to be the effectual peopling, employment, and strength of our possessions there.

These sayings are patched into the plain drugget of the *Account*; and Burke's power of giving a new turn to an old idea is more

than once suggested. Bishop Butler's remark, already quoted, that communities are 'liable to insanity' is echoed in the phrase, 'whole nations are often carried away by what would never influence one man of sense.'

The *Observations on 'The Present State of the Nation'* (1769) are an assault upon George Grenville, who had written or inspired the pamphlet so entitled. Grenville is pursued 'in his own long career, through the war, the peace, the finances, our trade, and our foreign politics.' Trade and finance are the chief topics; there is little colour, or figured language, in the tract, but there is a sprinkling of Latin quotation, and a good deal of Burke's trampling sarcasm. Many of the ideas emerge which he was again and again to expound. He was never to believe in the extension of the franchise; and here he is even willing to reduce it: 'by lessening the number, to add to the weight and independency of our voters.' Already he detests all 'abstract' systems of government; and his attitude towards the 'right' to tax the colonies is clearly stated. The right was to be retained, otherwise 'every principle of unity and subordination in the empire was gone for ever'; but policy and practice forbade that it should be exercised. This had been the view of the Rockingham party, who kept the Declaratory Act whilst repealing the Stamp Act. Burke also describes some of the taxes which were crushing the French people; but they seem to have passed, twenty years later, into the limbo of his mind. And, in his first sentence, rejecting the notion of the 'patriot king' under whom all parties would unite, he states the axiom that

> Party divisions, whether on the whole operating for good or evil, are things inseparable from free government.

The idea was to be expanded in his next, his far richer and more mature work, *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*[1] (1770).

There is no denying that Burke can be heavy; heavy, and in his first motions slow. He goes into action, crushing and creaking, armed and armoured, like a modern 'tank.' The objective is kept well in view; but he starts a long way back. Like his friend Johnson, he likes to begin with general maxims of weight and pomp. But soon we hear abruptly that

> the power of the crown, almost dead and rotten as Prerogative, has grown up anew, with much more strength, and far less odium, under the name of Influence;

and, a little later, that

a cabal of the closet and backstairs was substituted in the place of a national administration.

This was only the text of Wilkes or Junius ; but Burke expands it into a survey of the whole domestic crisis, and of constitutional principle. He reviews the despotism of the court party, the swollen civil list, the sorry comedy of the elections, and the loss of control by the Commons. It is a statement for the prosecution, and many details have been criticised. Some of his friends held that he bore too lightly on the king and on Lord Bute. But the chief interest of the work lies in Burke's exposition, the first among many, of his version of the Whig creed :

The king is the representative of the people ; so are the lords ; so are the judges. They all are trustees for the people, as well as the commons ; because no power is given for the sole sake of the holder ; and although government certainly is an institution of divine authority, yet its forms, and the persons who administer it, all originate from the people. . . . The virtue, spirit, and essence of a House of Commons consists in its being an express image of the feelings of the nation. It was not instituted to be a control *upon* the people, as of late it has been taught, by a doctrine of the most pernicious tendency. It was designed as a control *for* the people.

Not, however, *by* the people. Burke seems to regard the 'people' as a kind of *minor*, who somehow has, or had originally, the selection of his own 'trustees,' and who is bound to their successors. The arrangement that they should 'administer' for him is a 'divine' institution. Burke, at the moment, is concerned to show how the trust is being violated. The driving power of the treatise is his moral disgust at the sight of this abuse. The *Present Discontents* may be said to introduce a new kind of political prose. It is in a style unknown to Hobbes, to Halifax, or to Locke. The array of hard facts is held together by a single argument, and is sown with maxims which rise out of the occasion and also far above it. There is a new resource and volume in the diction, and plenty of rough and curious metaphor. But the work is a pamphlet, not a speech ; and the subject could not give full play to Burke's imagination. A greater one was at hand, for he had already made himself heard in Parliament on American affairs.

XI

The two great orations of 1774-5 were by no means his first. From 1767 onwards we have reports of his spoken word.

Many are mere summaries, in the third person ; others have the air of actual quotations, sometimes revised by the author ; others are extracts from magazines and appear in more than one shape. All have an unmistakable stamp. Burke is found speaking on the law of libel, on the affair of Wilkes, and on the 'relief' of Protestant dissenters. His peculiar strain of invective is to be heard ; the ponderous, dangerous flail is already at work :

> Such only as, regardless both of honour and shame, could wade through the more than Augean stable of the state, and rush through infamy to office, were deemed fit for confidence, or could be prevailed upon to take up places of trust.

Burke was happy above all in this, that while yet in the fulness of his powers he forestalled something like the judgment of history on the greatest issue of his time. His utterances on America include, besides imperfect reports, the speeches *On American Taxation* (April 19, 1774) ; *On Conciliation with America* (March 22, 1775) ; and another of 1778, which is extant in an abridgment, against the employment of Red Indian auxiliaries. This is said to have lasted more than three hours and to have been much applauded ; it is clear that even the country gentlemen cannot always have 'thought of dining' when Burke was 'up.' The *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol* (1777) is only the amplest of his addresses to that constituency. There are also the two brief ones of 1774 *On his Arrival at Bristol* and *On the Conclusion of the Poll*. All of these compositions are literature ; the two longer speeches and the *Letter* are elaborate works of art, each of a different order.

The discourse *On American Taxation*, a model of financial and historical reasoning, is lighted up by a series of portraits. Of Chatham, now fallen from power, Burke speaks in magnificent terms, but 'with the freedom of history,' closing with the admired but overloaded picture of his motley administration. Burke's laughter is apt to be strident ; Bennet Langton said that 'he hammered his wit upon an anvil, and the iron was cold' ; but this is hardly the right figure. Burke is never cold ; but when he jests, he can sometimes leave *us* cold. Of his opponents Grenville and Townshend he speaks handsomely, telling the truth about the dead without favour or malice. His imagination glorifies his ally, General Conway ; but the highest honours are kept for Rockingham, whose year of office had seemed like a break in the clouds during a long tragedy. The rolling sentences suddenly become short and rapid, in Burke's fashion :

He never stirred from his ground ; no, not an inch. He remained fixed and determined, in principle, in measure, and in conduct. He practised no management. He secured no retreat. He sought no apology.

The speech *On Conciliation* is differently laid out, and the general instinct has fixed on it as Burke's masterpiece. Indeed, not many other pieces of English oratory are ever read, in our places of education, as patterns of form and language at least equal to the antique, and as teaching both history and statecraft. It is late in the day, and almost absurd, to praise such a performance. The framework, no doubt, and the ornament as well, are of a past fashion—past, indeed ! The English and Latin poets are not often quoted to-day, or their words woven into the texture of a speech. Burke uses Virgil and Juvenal and Horace, Shakespeare and Milton, in this way, sometimes all but imperceptibly. Out of fashion, too, is the intricate, cunning alternation of argument, interlude, political theory, satire, and historical survey. What holds Burke's long speech together is his steady twofold vision : on the one hand, of principle, the principle that the aim is peace, and that the question of the mere *right* to tax is barren and fatal ; and, on the other, the vision of *things*—of the spaces of land and sea, and of multitudes of kindred men, labouring and producing over a whole continent, and bound together by the single spirit of liberty. His imagination, somewhat like that of Milton, works in masses, in numbers, and in processions ; not, properly speaking, in pictures. For he deals in colour, sound, and suggestion rather than in clear outline, and not one of his paragraphs could give a subject to a painter. The description of the whale-fishers is an example :

Whilst we are looking for them beneath the Arctic circle, we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold, that they are at the antipodes, and engaged under the frozen Serpent of the North.

We can imagine Milton fitting such images, and even the words, into his verse ; indeed, the debt of Burke to Milton reaches far beyond either actual quotation, or those strange eruptions of invective in his later work, for which the prose of his master supplied a pattern. What Milton really gave him was something in that strain of heroic rhythm and diction to which he rises when high-inspired :

' But to men truly initiated and rightly taught, these ruling and master principles, which, in the opinion of such men as I have mentioned, have no substantial existence, are in truth everything, and

all in all.'—'An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth, to argue another Englishman into slavery.'—'Your ancestors did however at length open their eyes to the ill husbandry of injustice.'

Burke, was not, like Milton, a Protestant of the Protestants; nor were his political dreams, like that of the *Ready and Easy Way*, built in the air. He would rank Milton, in this respect, with Harrington, as one of the 'fertile framers of imaginary commonwealths.' But behind all such differences there is that zeal for a rational and civic freedom, which Burke inhaled from Milton as surely as he transmitted it to the youthful Wordsworth.

The debates show how Burke throughout the war went on pleading vainly for concessions and for peace. The *Letter to the Sheriffs* was written in the midst of those years. It is a comprehensive review of affairs, and a confession of political faith, addressed to his constituents. There is little sign of temper, but a steady undertone of passion. The style is reflective rather than oratorical. There is the usual dislike of mere legal argument, and the familiar distinction between 'metaphysical' theorem and practical principle. 'It was our metaphysical quarrel,' Burke said afterwards, 'that caused the American war.' And he will not call the Americans traitors or even rebels. It is wrong to 'confound the unhappiness of civil dissensions with the crime of treason.' Neither had he and his friends, as it had been said, encouraged 'rebellion':

> *General* rebellions and revolts of a whole people never were *encouraged*, now or at any time. They are always *provoked*.

And, after two years of war, he insists that there is but one way to reconcile a great and haughty ruling nation with 'the high spirit of free dependencies':

> It is not by deciding the suit, but by compromising the difference, that peace can be restored or kept.

Next year, in Parliament, Burke protested that he had never 'wished' for American independence; but he came to see that the game was lost.

Needless to say, history views the event in another perspective, and Burke's whole argument has to be revalued. When he wrote, 'I think I know America,' he probably knew it better than any one else in England. But there was much he could not know—the conflicting groups of opinion overseas, and the long-standing impulse, which only slowly became articulate, towards independence. And he thought, no doubt, overmuch

in terms of English parties ; as though separation might have been averted if only the right sort of Whigs had been in office. Indeed, when he recited the five characteristics of the colonies—their numbers, their commerce, their temper, their religion, and their distance—he was pointing unawares to natural forces which may well have made the issue only a question of time. But though we cannot see the case wholly through Burke's eyes, it remains true that his grasp of it was firmer, and his vision *before* the event was surer, than that of any contemporary. It is also true that his speeches and his *Letter* are classics, which add, like the *Politics* of Aristotle, to the general store of wisdom.

XII

In 1780 Burke rendered at Bristol a magnificent account of his stewardship, in the form of a reply to critics. Bristol would not listen, and he declined the poll for re-election. He had found time, even during the American crisis, for many other activities. He now defended his protest against the laws of imprisonment for debt, and uttered a finished eulogy of John Howard, the purger of the gaols. He justified his policy, as he had done in Parliament, in the matter of Irish trade. Above all, he unfolded afresh, and at length, his impassioned plea for the abrogation of the penal laws against Roman Catholics. The Irish, as the worst sufferers, were his especial concern. Burke's protest may well rank in the literature of toleration [1] beside those of Milton and of Jeremy Taylor. But Taylor, and even Locke, on political grounds which (as Burke explains) had now disappeared, had made an exception *against* the Catholics. Burke's regard for his mother's faith, and for many members of it, is as well known as his devout attachment to the English Establishment. All these apparently scattered topics were in his eyes united ; they formed part, as he expresses it, of 'the diversified but connected fabric of universal justice.' The words give us a key to Burke's political thinking, in its moral aspect. Such were the ideas that he cast, in unwelcome profusion, before his constituents.

During the next ten years his eloquence was not less inexhaustible. He spoke against concessions to the Gordon rioters ; against the punishment of the pillory ; against a proposal for triennial parliaments ; against the repeal of the Marriage Act, which forbade minors to marry without parental consent ; against the enlargement of the franchise ; and against the slave trade. But the two great matters which had long lain

upon his mind were domestic finance and the affairs of India. He now put forth his whole strength, and delivered, besides three speeches in the Commons which are among his greatest, the historic charges in Westminster Hall. Burke, though now past fifty, showed incredible energy in research, and worked and spoke at a white heat. There is some change in the tone of his oratory. The voice, though as powerful as ever, is louder ; the humour and irony grow harsher ; and the imagery is more often hectic and extreme. Even in 1770 he had written to a friend :

> It is but too well known that I debate with great vehemence and asperity, and with very little management either of the opinions or the persons of many of my adversaries. They deserve not much quarter, and I give and receive but very little.

In the speech *On Economical Reform* there are as many preliminary ceremonies as at the launching of a warship. Burke must first secure the moral foundations of his argument. To this he ' advances,' he says, ' with a tremor that shakes me to the inmost fibre of my frame.' Prejudice and enmity are the lot of every preacher of thrift ; he must be a ' man of a long-sighted and strong-nerved humanity,' if he is to face the victims of retrenchment. At last he glides into his subject. By a double stroke of oratory, he contrasts English extravagance with French frugality, and also ' ourselves,' as we are in 1780, with ' ourselves in our better and happier days.' Then he plunges into his elaborate plan of reform, parts of which were to be realised. His method is to lighten the strain with interludes, carefully timed, of learned and rasping pleasantry. The audience was not thin-skinned, and cared little for subtleties. Both friend and foe might relish the picture of the king, in his own person, going to law with himself in the person of the Duke of Lancaster, and ' paying the costs of both ' ; or that of the Duke of Newcastle,

> who is now probably sitting quietly at a very good dinner directly under us, and acting *high life below stairs*, whilst we, his masters, are filling our mouths with unsubstantial sound and talking of hungry economy over his head.

Other flights and sallies, less directly aimed at the ' sense of the house,' and indeed somewhat above its head, but still well considered and rehearsed, and surely intended for posterity to read, are full of literary echoes. Such is the vision of the old, costly ' establishments,' whose ' reason is gone,' and which are now ' vast inhospitable halls,' where

'Boreas, and Eurus, and Caurus, and Argestes loud,' howling through the vacant lobbies, and clattering the doors of deserted guardrooms, appal the imagination, and conjure up the grim spectres of departed tyrants—the Saxon, and the Norman, and the Dane; the stern Edwards and fierce Henries—who stalk from desolation to desolation, through the dreary vacuity, and melancholy succession of chill and comfortless chambers.

I quote this, because it is really as bad as it well could be. Burke's wonderful and distinctive rhythm, indeed, is there; but the whole image is undisciplined, wholly beyond the occasion, and rudely patched into its place. Burke learnt much from his classics, and something from the Augustans, but never measure. Yet his faults are those of mental opulence: the overflow, to use a figure of Longinus, not of a small stream, but of the Nile or Danube.

Or say, rather, of the Ganges: for the mind turns next to Burke's Indian orations, and to the great business which presently engrossed him. In 1796 he was to write:

I have been most painfully and disagreeably employed in bringing to a conclusion that principal act which is to be the glory or the shame of my whole public life.

There is no question of shame; and yet, since history has so greatly qualified Burke's accusations, the affair was hardly the chief glory of his public life. The Westminster Hall orations against Hastings, in spite of glorious passages, are not, as literature, on the level of Burke's greatest writings. None of them are equal to the speeches *On the East India Bill*, or *On the Nabob of Arcot's Debts*, both of which belong to the same campaign.

The former of these was made on the proposal to withdraw or deplete the powers of the Company; it is also an arraignment of Hastings and his administration. It is distinguished, first of all, by the gift of verbal *mapping* which Burke had shown in the speech *On Conciliation*. In a few pages he gives a panoramic view of India, its shape and size, the numbers and what he calls the 'quality' of its inhabitants: 'infinitely diversified by manners, by religion, by hereditary employment, through all their possible combinations.' But first he sets forth his conception at this period of the 'rights of men' as properly understood; and, in particular, of the 'chartered' rights of men, and of the true nature of a charter. The key-sentences are these:

All political power which is set over men, and all privilege claimed or exercised in exclusion of them, being wholly artificial, and in some

way a derogation from the natural equality of mankind at large, ought to be in some way or other exercised ultimately for their benefit. . . . Such rights, or privileges, or whatever else you choose to call them, are all in the strictest sense a *trust*; and it is the essence of every trust to be rendered *accountable*; and even totally to *cease* when it substantially varies from the purposes for which alone it could have a lawful existence.

The application to the Company is evident:

If the abuse is proved, the contract is broken; and we re-enter into all our rights; that is, into the exercise of our duties.

Such expressions were brought up against Burke afterwards when he raged against the Jacobins; and indeed, they might well have been applauded by Dr. Richard Price. Burke would have replied that the 'prescription' attaching to an ancient political system was different from the claims of a rapacious Company. But he was to defend himself at length in the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*. And we must take account not only of his theories but of his deeper emotions, which went out to all those who suffered under the Eastern sun. No one has ever struck this chord so powerfully. The speech is also enlivened by the picture of the nabobs, who were already the butts of comedy and fiction; and the climax is the warm panegyric upon Fox himself. 'The Ganges and the Indus are the patrimony of the fame of my right honourable friend.' This is perhaps the most perfect of all Burke's 'characters' of statesmen, and is all the better for its allusion to Fox's faults: that is, to what they are *not*; and to the 'darling popularity' which he was now ready to sacrifice.

Two years later, in the speech *On the Nabob of Arcot's Debts*, Burke refers, in his Latinised rhetoric, to the rejection of the East India Bill: 'O illustrious disgrace! O victorious defeat!' He now led an attack, with horse, foot, and artillery, upon an immense piece of jobbery. The speech is chiefly a mordant recital of facts; but it contains one of Burke's great set pieces, the picture of Hyder Ali in the Carnatic. This is usually torn out for the anthologies; it must be read in its place, to see how admirably it is woven into the story. Elsewhere the language becomes, in the worst sense of the word, Miltonic; but even Morus and Salmasius were never so bespattered with comparisons drawn from the pigsty and the deadhouse. By their side, the description of certain committees as 'six great chopping bastards' is only a playful flick of humour.

XIII

In one of his speeches on Warren Hastings, Burke, we are told,

> reasoned a good deal in terms of painting, upon overcharging a picture with colour, in order to hide an imperfect outline; and declared that he would take care that his drawing should be correct and perfect before he put on any colouring at all.

That is, he would charge the accused with specific crimes, and would not merely declaim against him. And in fact Burke's invective, fierce and lurid as it is, springs fairly out of his argument, and does not overwhelm it. His great performances were in the year 1788, when he opened the indictments; his replies, which are for the most part on detail, were completed in 1794 by a great peroration, tinged now with the anti-revolutionary passion which had meanwhile come to fill his soul. These speeches are not among Burke's greatest, in the eyes of posterity, though so potent at the time. They contain much less of his permanent wisdom, and much more of his truculence, than those upon America; but he is Burke still. Macaulay brings out how deeply the history, the civilisation, and the claims of India had sunk into his mind; and he had already, in Parliament, shown his mastery of the theme. The speeches in Westminster Hall often rise above the occasion, when Burke discourses on the customs of Hinduism ('the Gentoos'), or on the laws of Mohammed. His total service to the Indian cause is not to be measured by the verdict of history upon the charges against Hastings, who is now seen in quite another light. Burke was the first man who by his knowledge and imaginative vision brought home to the English mind the realities of India.

The *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) are a treatise in the form of a letter addressed to 'a very young gentleman at Paris.' To his title Burke might well have added the words, 'and on the possible revolution in England.' For England is in his mind throughout; and it is some time before he settles down to dissect the National Assembly, the new electoral system, the new finance, and the new army. The immediate provocation was the activity of the Constitutional Society and the Revolution Society, and the sermon of Dr. Richard Price, with its talk of 'the right to choose our own governors' and to 'cashier them for misconduct' ('the ceremony of which these gentlemen talk so much at their ease'). He exclaims that the events of 1688 gave no countenance to such blasphemy. There was no parallel between the two

revolutions. James the Second had tried to 'subvert the Protestant church and state'; in France there was no such dire 'disease' calling for exceptional treatment. Burke speaks of the British constitution in exalted terms, as though it had been framed in heaven; 'placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world.' The French should have 'looked to their neighbours in this land'; and their polity 'well deserved to have its excellences heightened, its faults corrected, and its capacities improved into a British constitution.' Moreover, as a matter of theory, the 'real' rights of men gave them no power to 'choose and cashier' their governors, whose legal and moral title, originally given by a 'convention,' rested on hereditary succession.

Burke's Whiggism, thus set forth, comes close to the essential creed and temper of modern Conservatism. In proof, it is enough to read his pages on the Crown, on the Lords, on the Commons, on the franchise, on property, on the Church, on the bishops, and on religion and morality. All these, he holds, are the preservers of 'our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars.' In the centre are the altars. 'Man is by his constitution a religious animal'; and, after his fling at the extinct deists, Burke fulminates against the 'atheists and infidels' who have done their worst to ruin France. In his later writings his invective against Voltaire and Rousseau was to rise into a shriek. He saw that the sceptics and *philosophes* had prepared the way; but he really knew little about them. Voltaire and Rousseau were not 'atheists'; and the *intelligentsia* could have had little practical effect but for the solid grievances of the people. But this is to repeat what all the historians have said: that a gradual, Whiggish, orderly change was impossible; that the old regime was too far gone; and that Burke, though he had tried to investigate, did not realise the social and economic collapse. The prodigious effect of the *Reflections*, at home and abroad, has often been described, and how powerfully Burke contributed to the long conservative reaction; and how the fulfilment of his assurance that democracy would end in tyranny gave him the authority of a prophet.

In the *Reflections* the style is mostly close and grave, condensed and even congested; but the fires are only banked down, and find many an outlet. One is through irony, or polite understatement, suitable for the ears of a 'very young gentleman at Paris':

> It is my misfortune to entertain great doubts concerning several material points in your late transactions.

This is in the manner of Swift when he means to be specially ferocious. But Burke cannot keep up the pose like Swift, and prefers the savage, learned, and allusive manner of Milton. When he comes to Dr. Price and the conventicles, he imagines them, fantastically, as occupied by preachers of rank and station, and exclaims:

I should only stipulate that these new *Mess-Johns* in robes and coronets should keep some sort of bounds in the democratic and levelling principles which are expected from their titled pulpits.

When he is angriest, Burke seems to see a hostile audience before him, sitting there to be taunted; and these outbreaks come suddenly, in the middle of the solid argument. He has been referring to certain would-be reformers, and adds:

These gentlemen deal in regeneration; but at any price I should hardly yield my rigid fibres to be regenerated by them; nor begin, in my grand climacteric, to squall in their new accents, or to stammer in my second cradle, the elemental sounds of their barbarous metaphysics.

It is ungainly enough; but who, after all, would wish it away? and besides, it is in a stout old tradition of invective. That mixture of long words with sharp homely ones (*climacteric . . . squall*) comes down from the previous century, and is found in Barrow as well as in Milton. Burke resorts to it for relief, and then goes on severely as before. The *Reflections*, compared with the *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, are restrained. Also they are illumined by the passages that are known to those who know nothing else of Burke: by the vision of Marie Antoinette in her splendour; the comparison of the English declaimers to 'half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern'; and the picture of human society as a partnership between all the generations. Less familiar, probably, is the paragraph which opens:

The English people are satisfied, that to the great the consolations of religion are as necessary as its instructions. They, too, are among the unhappy. They feel personal pain and domestic sorrow. In these they have no privilege, but are subject to pay their full contingent to the contributions levied on mortality. They want this sovereign balm. . . .

This sounds like a commonplace; but not so the turn that Burke gives to it. Religion, he adds, is also the one hope and consolation for the *idle* rich; of the titled wasters who suffer 'from the palled satiety which attends on all pleasures that may be bought.'

I have sketched elsewhere the literary war produced by the *Reflections*, and also Burke's subsequent writings; but will add something here upon their style and tenor. In the long reply to critics, *A Letter to a Member of the National Assembly* (1791), the tone is much the same. Burke predicts, what was to occur two years afterwards, the 'assassination' of the king and queen. He explains that he had only meant to commend the 'principles,' not the 'exterior form and positive arrangement,' of the British state; but he has no definite advice to offer to France. The historical notes on Monk and Cromwell are in his best style. His view of Rousseau is perplexed. He says that he is a 'moralist, or he is nothing'; nay, he is 'sometimes moral, and moral in a very sublime strain'; but still, is a moralist whose code contradicts the Commandments. Canning's poem *The New Morality* was to put the case against Rousseau still more pungently. In *Thoughts on French Affairs* (1791), written after the Constitution had been voted, Burke urges that the cause of order has now become international, and asks 'what direction the French spirit of proselytism is likely to take' in Switzerland, Germany, and Italy. The fatal seed had been sown everywhere. The tract closes with what Matthew Arnold praises as Burke's 'return upon himself'; but it sounds more like a kind of desperate resignation: 'if a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of men will be fitted to it.' Burke also thought, erroneously, that he had 'done with this subject for ever.' He was never to have done with it; the war altered the whole aspect of affairs, and Burke wrote on. Meantime, in 1792, he produced his *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*.

This, the most formal statement of his political faith, is a reply to the 'new' Whigs who had, in effect, reproached the author of the *Reflections* with apostasy: with having, as he puts it, 'abandoned those principles of liberty which have given energy to his youth, and in spite of his censors will afford repose and consolation to his declining age.' The *Appeal* is written in the third person. 'The substantial charge upon him is concerning his doctrines relative to the Revolution of 1688.' This was to touch Burke upon the raw; and back to 1688 he goes, quoting William of Orange and many authorities at length. No summary can do justice to his array of argument. He pleads for a 'true natural aristocracy'; he again attacks the supposed rights of 'the majority, told by the head,' to break the 'compact, tacit or expressed,' into which we are all born, and to overthrow, at their pleasure, an old inherited polity.

A stately but obscure passage connects this reasoning with Burke's theology. God has sent us into the world bound, without our choice or consent, under certain obligations, and under a system which it is not for us to alter—*except*, indeed, under a 'necessity which is out of and above all rule.' Such a necessity, it is implied, had occurred in 1688, but not in 1789. The *Appeal*, though fervid, is little touched by the violence and strain of Burke's later works. His sincerity requires no proof; and his essential consistency can be defended on other grounds than those which he advances. He had always proclaimed the sacred continuity of the social fabric; he still, in his own eyes (though we may not fully agree), spoke for what he judged to be the cause of the people; and the change was one of emphasis rather than of principle.

In two further tracts, on the *Present State of Affairs* (1792) and on the *Policy of the Allies* (1793), Burke argued for an active foreign policy, based on an offensive alliance, and for rallying the French exiles from all quarters. In another, *On the Conduct of the Minority*, he assailed the whole policy of Fox and the revolutionary societies. This was in 1793; in the next year he retired from Parliament, and waited for about two years, saving his ammunition for a last great volley. It is discharged in the unfinished *Letter to Earl Fitzwilliam* and the three *Letters on a Regicide Peace* (written 1796-7). These last deal with Pitt's unsuccessful negotiations of 1795. The first, 'on the overtures,' is a passionate dissuasive from peace; the second, 'on the genius and character of the French Revolution as regards other nations,' is in the same sense, with yet fiercer invective; and the third, 'on the rupture of the negotiation,' reviews the resources of the country for continuing the war. The *Letters* are noteworthy, not only for their amazing eruptions of language, but for the expression of Burke's final and mature views on war:

> If it be the means of wrong and violence, it is the sole means of justice amongst nations. Nothing can banish it from the world. Those who say otherwise, intending to impose upon us, do not impose upon themselves.

And again, in golden words:

> The blood of man should never be shed but to redeem the blood of man. It is well shed for our family, for our friends, for our God, for our country, for our kind. The rest is vanity; the rest is crime.

Burke ranges over the past wars of the century and judges them on these principles. Long spaces of the *Letters* are grave,

almost level in tone ; but they are little ordered, and circle back again to the same points. Two other writings of Burke's latter years must be mentioned, in which his old mastery of form reappears. These are *Thoughts on Scarcity* (1795), addressed to Pitt ; and the *Letter to a Noble Lord* (1796).

The *Thoughts*, except for a final spurt against the French 'parricides of their country,' are a piece of cool reasoning on the needs of the agricultural community in the present hard times. Burke, as a country gentleman, discourses on sheep and porkers, and more especially on the grain industry, and propounds his remedies for the shortage. In passing, he gives his conception of the business of the state. It is to look after religion, the revenue, the magistracy, and defence ; from everything else it had best hold aloof. Of the officials he says, in terms which (as one editor observes) are ' remarkably modern,'

> They *cannot* do the lower duty ; and, in proportion as they try it, they will certainly fail in the higher.

The *Letter to a Noble Lord* (1796), the most perfect of Burke's shorter writings, is also the last great great display of destructive irony in the century that produced Swift, Fielding, and Gibbon. The tone is that of weary, yet dangerous, contempt. The noble lord, the young Duke of Bedford, who had uttered taunts and criticisms in the Lords upon Burke's pension—' my mortuary pension '—is as dust scattered in the air ; nothing is left of him but his title, on which Burke rings the changes to the last. But if this had been all, the effect would have been less majestic. In his amplifying, ramifying style Burke makes his last *apologia* ; recites his services to economical reform, and the part he had played since 1789 ; portrays at full length Keppel, the uncle of his accuser ; and also, with the privilege of an old and a great man, himself, and the son whom he has lost. The *Letter* is arranged with great skill, and is really a written oration. He does not forget to lash the Jacobins, whom he pictures as joyously raiding the wealth and estates of the house of Russell.

Burke's letters are less studied in language, and here he is not careful to be eloquent ; but the longest, written in 1771 to Bishop Markham, is another formal defence of his policy and career. He condemns the man who ' accepts the *fact* of the Revolution ' of 1688, and yet ' abandons its *principles* ' ; and explains how false it is that he himself accepts such ' malignant fables ' as the doctrine of passive obedience. His correspondence in 1790 with Sir Philip Francis, who besought him to soften the *Reflections*, has the same kind of interest. He

defends his commiseration of Marie Antoinette; the contrast, he says, of her condition in 1774 with that in 1789

did draw tears from me and wetted my paper. These tears came again into my eyes, almost as often as I looked at the description;—they may again. You do not believe this fact, nor that these are my real feelings; but that the whole is affected, or, as you express it, downright foppery. My friend,—I tell you it is truth, and will be truth when you and I are no more; and will exist as long as men with their natural feelings shall exist. I shall say no more on this foppery of mine.

The general tone of the letters is self-restrained. Burke's remonstrance (1765) with Gerard Hamilton, whose secretary he had been, and who proposed to him what was virtually a contract of slavery, is dignified and finely tempered. His large heart and generous habit of mind are seen everywhere, and not least in writing to his son, a somewhat disappointing son, to whom he gives the kindest counsels. Also he describes to Richard the funeral of Reynolds in St. Paul's, with all its ceremonies and 'long black train':

Everything turned out fortunately for poor Sir Joshua, from the moment of his birth to the hour I saw him laid in the earth. Everything, I think, was just as our deceased friend would, if living, have wished it to be; for he was, as you know, not altogether indifferent to this kind of observances. . . .

This kind of regard for the facts was a mark of the leaders of the Literary Club, who spoke out to one another and were above the danger of the revulsions that wait on flattery. Some of Burke's pleasantest letters are addressed to Arthur Young; they are full of detail about crops and live stock; and here he speaks simply, again like a country gentleman, happy down at Beaconsfield.

XIV

As may be imagined, there were some who could not listen to Burke's speeches but were struck with admiration upon reading them. Both in the speeches and in his books, he is essentially a *taxing* writer. He cannot be read quickly; he does not, like Gibbon, float us along with the stream; and he does not, like Hume, leave us under the illusion that we have been thinking easily. Excess of thought is not a popular quality; and Burke contrives to be at once, as Gibbon calls him, diffusive, and also very condensed. His talk, of which the records are all too few, is said to have been affluent, varied, and happy; but we can

understand Johnson's remark, made when he was himself ill, 'That fellow calls forth all my powers; were I to see Burke now it would kill me.' We have to face a mind which is not content until it has dug down to a principle, and has set it forth with many sub-principles and qualifications, leaving the application to come—as come it will—in God's good time; which is ever to be tempted off the trail by a metaphor, an allusion, or a Latin verse, that is too good to lose; and is continually talking to itself, and starting afresh so as to recapture the panting audience. But as the labour of accompanying such a mind, so is the reward. Burke is seldom really obscure, if only we attend to him. Enough has been said already of his lapses into the kind of violence that defeats itself. His similes may sometimes be driven too far, and forget their purpose; but it is the same with Shakespeare, of whom Burke often reminds us. Historically, these sallies represent a revolt against the flat elegance into which the lesser Georgian prose had been descending. In Burke there is something angry, primitive, and Irish, which is refreshing after a course of the equable writers.

His language responds to all these demands and is no less ample, exact, and versicoloured than it needs to be. His store of actual words, his draft on the dictionary, seems to be larger than that of any contemporary. The learned and Latin element is strong; but it is held in check by the need of speaking to a public audience, and it does not, as it does with Johnson, constitute a manner. It is the same with his use of figures;[1] he commands all the devices of the schools; but antithesis, repetition, apostrophe, and the rest, do not produce a mechanical effect. For Burke they are, in Coleridge's phrase, the 'offspring of passion,' and with it they subside. Another difference between Burke and his fellow-practitioners of elaborate English is harder to state. With Gibbon, and Johnson, and Reynolds, the sentence is rounded off beforehand, and the end, we may be sure, was foreseen at the beginning. Burke, of course, can write in this way whenever he will; and often he does so in order to close a paragraph, or to formulate an article of faith:

> Political problems do not primarily concern truth or falsehood. They relate to good or evil. What in the result is likely to produce evil, is politically false; that which is productive of good, politically true.

Macaulay could not be more summary. But more characteristic is the lengthened sentence, in which Burke becomes aware of his thought as it proceeds, one idea propagating and

throwing off another, and then another ; as in some soliloquy of Henry the Fifth or Coriolanus. In the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* he hits on the phrase, 'a true natural aristocracy'; and, asking himself what he means by it, he draws on his memories, begins, and, in a sentence of over two hundred words, perfectly built and harmonious, completes the portrait. The effect is that of the living voice, with its quicker or slower pulsation and varying length of clause ; the structure is not thought out beforehand, but it comes right.

And so, too, with Burke's rhythm ; on which little need be said, for it has been fitly honoured by a writer of authority. As we should expect, it is never light or facile, nor does it run into a pattern. Its usual movement suggests that of a strong swimmer overcoming an adverse tide. And it can rise to an extraordinary complexity and grandeur, though the sense of effort is never wholly lost. The speech *On Conciliation* and the *Letter to a Noble Lord* supply, perhaps, the best examples. The antithetic manner with its recurrent cadences, which was so much favoured by Burke's friends, can often be heard in his periods ; but it is his servant, not his master. It would tire an audience if carried too far. We separate rhythm from language, and scan it out, using the technical terms of prosody ; but this, of course, is merely a discipline to sharpen our perceptions. In verse and prose alike, rhythm comes both *first* and *last* : first, because it is caught by the ear of the nearer sooner than the meaning ; and last, because it is the last expression of the artist's personality. A great rhythm, being the crown of a great style, can be commanded only by a great nature. And to this, with Burke, we always come back; to his range, and to his volume. His faults are such as beseem a man of his stature. He did not write or speak at leisure, like the historian, the moralist, or the critic; but in the full tide of state affairs, always attacking or defending. His words, inevitably, betray the strain, and transmit the discords. But, as in a tragedy, the discords are required for the full expression of the thought. Burke's own words, in the third *Letter on a Regicide Peace*, are here appropriate :

> Indeed it is when a great nation is in great difficulties, that minds must exalt themselves to the occasion, or all is lost. Strong passion under the direction of a feeble reason feeds a low fever, which serves only to destroy the body that entertains it. But vehement passion does not always indicate an infirm judgment. It often accompanies, and actuates, and is even auxiliary to a powerful understanding; and when they both conspire and act harmoniously, their force is great to destroy disorder within, and to repel injury from abroad.

Burke died in July 1797, when two of his admirers, the authors of *Lyrical Ballads*, were conversing in the Quantocks. He was buried at Beaconsfield ; and he had written, in a youthful letter, and in the spirit of Wordsworth,

> Do you know, I had rather sleep in the southern corner of a little country churchyard than in the tomb of the Capulets ?

One other writer of great repute must be mentioned, who was in the field earlier than Burke and who attracted in passing the fury of Junius. Sir William Blackstone (1723-1780), in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765-9), which had been delivered as lectures at Oxford in 1758, shows himself a political theorist as well as a lawyer. Some of his theories have drawn on him not only the wrath of radicals but the scorn of the scientific. His conservatism, unlike Burke's, is of a peculiarly smug and impermeable kind ; and it has been mordantly described by Bentham (in his *Fragment on Government*) and by Austin and others. Blackstone's view of the constitution has reflected, defined, and intensified, perhaps more than any other book, the feeling not only of our governing class, but of a great proportion of the governed. In the peroration to his four volumes he exclaims that the English constitution is

> so wisely contrived, so strongly raised, and so highly finished, that it is hard to speak with that praise which is justly and severely its due ; the thorough and attentive contemplation of it will furnish its best panegyric.

It was to the laity, and to the ruling class, that he spoke in the first instance. In an opening discourse he pleads that the study of law was required, ' in all considerable situations of life,' by the ' young gentlemen of England,' who were notably lacking in such instruction. He is addressing an audience of future landowners, magistrates, administrators, members of Parliament, and peers. And in his first section, on ' public rights,' he describes to them the machine of state, in which, after a long process, the royal, the patrician, and the popular elements are perfectly and incomparably balanced. Probably it was this part of the *Commentaries*, together with the account, in the second section, of the law of property (another sacred institution), that sank deepest in the general mind. That section is headed, somewhat oddly, the ' rights of things,' which appears to mean the right *over* things. The third and fourth parts are concerned with ' public ' and with ' private wrongs,' which answer respectively, though not perfectly, to the divisions of criminal and civil law. The whole ground is laid out in

admirable order. The experts do not credit Blackstone with very great technical precision ; but they tell us that his work, as a whole, dominated the legal mind for several generations. Admittedly, he was the first, and was for long the only, writer to present, in a large and synthetic view, the facts and also the living functions of English law ; and Maitland has said that the book gives 'an artistic picture' of the subject 'such as had never been drawn of any similar system.'

The value of Blackstone's work is luckily independent of his abstract foundations. In his overture, he confounds in the blandest fashion the sense of physical, moral, divine, and positive law. The phantom of the 'law of nature,' in its ethical sense, embarrassed, as we have seen, even Burke ; and Blackstone, who identifies it with the law of God, makes it the foundation, though only in part, of 'municipal' or civil law. Far more satisfactory is his literary form. The *Commentaries* were lectures, and have all the lucidities, graces, and apt illustrations that befit that way of teaching. They flow easily even where the matter is abstruse ; they are signally clear ; and, like the presidential addresses of Reynolds, they are gowned and draped in a certain dignity. They are, in fact, a book, and not merely a treatise ; and Blackstone's style, which is by no means antiquated, has counted greatly, and justly, to his honour. It would be wrong to leave him without quoting from his well-filed rhymes entitled *A Lawyer's Farewell to his Muse*, originally printed in Dodsley's *Collection*, and still to be found in the silver treasuries : they run to over a hundred lines, and describe his migration from the country, with its 'honied oaks' and 'aged elms' and from the reading of Shakespeare and Milton (and Waller) to the city and the law. But he hopes one day to return.

> Then welcome business, welcome strife,
> Welcome the cares, the thorns of life,
> The visage wan, the pore-blind sight,
> The toil by day, the lamp at night,
> The tedious forms, the solemn prate,
> The pert dispute, the dull debate,
> The drowsy bench, the babbling hall,
> For thee, fair Justice, welcome all !
> Thus, though my noon of life be past,
> Yet let my setting sun, at last,
> Find out the still, the rural cell,
> Where sage retirement loves to dwell,
> There let me taste the homefelt bliss
> Of innocence and inward peace. . . .

He became, however, a judge, and so ended.

CHAPTER XX

HISTORY AND LETTERS

I

By the middle of the century the craft of historical composition in Britain was still sadly in arrear; and it was a commonplace, that we were far behind the Italians and the French. The note of self-reproach [1] is often heard from writers such as Addison, Bolingbroke, and Johnson, who could themselves do little to remove it. Bacon, indeed, had long ago produced a masterly record of a single reign, that of Henry the Seventh. The classic work of Clarendon, first published in the years 1702-4, is in the nature of a memoir made by an actor in the scene; and the same is true of Burnet, a writer of a different rank, whose *History of His Own Times* appeared in posthumous instalments (1723-34). Both books powerfully quickened the desire for a real history of England; but it was long before this was to be satisfied. In 1770 Hume could say with justice, 'I believe this is the historical age'; and he spoke better than he knew, for six years later came the first volumes of the *Decline and Fall*; and Hume could no longer then have added so proudly, that the Scottish was 'the historical nation.' The true 'historical age' had begun in 1754 with the first volume of his own *History of England*; and that age includes nearly four decades. The dates of Hume's production, in this kind, cover seven years (1754-61); those of Robertson, thirty-two (1759-91); and those of Gibbon, twelve (1776-88). The three authors, in respect of historical value, form an ascending series, with Gibbon on a somewhat solitary height. The literary scale would be different; for Robertson, though often underrated as a writer, cannot rank with the other two; and these, again, while each is a master of his art, are so opposite in manner that they can hardly be compared.

There was, of course, both during and before their time, abundance of historical work by other hands. It is not for this survey to recite the books that are, or that were, consulted rather than read, such as the state papers, or other such material,

that were printed during the period ; nor yet the histories, that with the best will in the world cannot be called literature. All this belongs to the chronicle of learning, and is for those competent to write it. I may, however, barely note some of the forces that quickened the revival, determined its character, and indeed made it possible. 1. There was the amassing of erudite matter, which had gone on quietly in many quarters and made no pretence of artistic form. The huge collections of Muratori in Italy had a certain counterpart in the twenty volumes of Thomas Rymer's and Robert Sanderson's *Foedera*, a record of the conventions and alliances of England during some five centuries. The last two volumes of this monumental work appeared in 1735. 2. The critical sifting of material, carried on so destructively by Bayle, was a needful prelude to any sound construction ; and the spirit of Bayle, applied to making safe the foundations, lives again in Gibbon. The speeches of Burke, like the *Wealth of Nations*, show a great architectural power based on exact knowledge. The old pseudo-learning came to be discredited and almost forgotten. 3. The conception of history on a grand scale, and informed by some ruling principle, was furnished not only by the ancients but by two authors of diametrically opposed temper. Bossuet's *Histoire universelle*, and Voltaire's *Histoire générale*, to which Robertson makes his acknowledgments, are both, whatever their inherent value, models of proportioning and style. Voltaire in this way repaid some of his debt to England. 4. The further conception of history as determined, in great measure, by impersonal forces, or in other words as a scientific study, had been made familiar by Montesquieu ; and Robertson once more, was the first writer in Britain to review a wide historical area in the light of such an idea. All these four influences affected the revival of the craft ; and each of them would call for a prolonged study. 5. A more obvious one may be added : the English history of the past hundred years was the arsenal of statesmen and politicians, from Bolingbroke up to Burke, and from Junius down to Wilkes. Indeed, the historical sense and vision are stronger in Burke than in any contemporary except Gibbon, and his feeling for the continuity of institutions is unequalled.

In order to show the task that awaited Hume, it is well to mention two of the historians, or rather annalists, on whom he drew. Thirty years before his *History* began to appear, Paul de Rapin, or Rapin-Thoyras, had published (1723-5) his *Histoire d'Angleterre*, which was translated and continued by

Nicholas Tindal, and which meanwhile had almost held the field. Rapin's tomes begin at the beginning, giving the Saxon posterity of Woden and 'Friga,' and come down to 1688. He made some use of the *Foedera*, and took seventeen years over his task; and is careful, in the later periods, to sum up, from the standpoint of an impartial Protestant, the opposing arguments of Cavalier and Roundhead, Whig and Tory. His *Dissertation* (1717) on the two modern parties is written in the same spirit, for the benefit of his own countrymen. He thinks it is for the good of the realm that neither faction should predominate, and he makes his distinctions. Not all churchmen, he points out, were Tories, and not all Presbyterians were political Whigs. Rapin is a laborious chronicler, who set an example of research, and furnished some guidance to Hume and others. For some time the challenge was not taken up by any Briton; but Thomas Carte, who pointedly signs himself 'an Englishman' on the title-page of his four vast volumes, attempted to make it good. His *General History of England* begins at the beginning, in the mists, and was planned to extend to the Restoration; but Carte only lived to bring it down to 1654. His first volume came out in 1747; his last, the unfinished one, in 1755, a year after Hume's appearance. Carte's reading and investigations were deeper than those of any precursor; but he has no general ideas, he is diffuse to the point of enormity, and his leaden style is not ingratiating. He was a violent Jacobite, and many times faced attacks, and even persecution, for his opinions. He can see no fault at all in Charles the Martyr; and he finds that Milton 'never scrupled prostituting his pen for the most execrable purposes.' Also Joan of Arc is described as 'this cheat or enthusiast.' Carte's *History*, which started with good omens of popularity, is said to have fallen into undue neglect for the singular reason that in a note he had praised the Pretender, and had asserted that prince's power to touch successfully for the 'king's evil.' The way, in any case, was clear for Hume, who by 1754 had published (Ch. XVII.) most of his philosophical work except his *Four Dissertations* (1757) and the posthumous *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*.

II

Hume's *History*, though long reprinted, and edited in abridged form in later times, is admittedly void of authority. He wrote it quickly; the first instalment covers the reigns of James the First and Charles the First; and the second, two years later

(1756), extends to the Revolution. He then went backwards: the volumes on the Tudors (1759) and on the preceding history from the time of Julius Caesar (1761) completed the work. It was issued, in continuous shape, in 1778 with his 'last corrections.' Its value, naturally, decreases as the date recedes. Hume took far less pains than Robertson; and is pronounced to have used his authorities, many of which were at hand in the Advocates' Library, casually and imperfectly. His air of equity, and of judicially summing up the arguments, is delusive, though perfectly sincere. His growing aversion to Whiggery and to the English led him, in successive editions, to modify his text in accordance with his prejudice. He came to feel towards the English much as Johnson felt towards the Scots. But he could not become, like Johnson, an unmitigated Tory. His editing of his text was necessarily imperfect, and the result incongruous. He could not really disown the settlement of 1688. He had started with the year 1603 because it seemed to him to mark the true beginning of the fray between privilege and prerogative; and in his final version he retained the declaration that the Revolution had given 'such an ascendant to popular principles as has put the nature of the English constitution beyond the reach of controversy,' and that the country had 'since enjoyed, if not the best system of government, at least the most entire system of liberty that ever was known amongst mankind.' 'Extremes of all kinds,' he adds, 'are to be avoided'; and, somewhat forgetting that precept, he states that the English have no reason

> to prefer the ultimate authority of the prince and his unbounded prerogative to that noble liberty, that sweet equity, and that happy security by which they are at present distinguished above all nations of the earth.

Irony, no doubt, is never far off in Hume; but whether such sayings are ironical, or whether they are simply inconsistent with his thrusts against the England of the year 1778, we are left to judge. He is careful to say that the rule of Elizabeth, whilst in name absolute, was in practice checked by other forces, and by custom; and that England was then, in reality,

> more remote [1] from a despotic and Eastern monarchy than the present government of that kingdom, where the people, though guarded by multiplied laws, are totally naked, defenceless, and disarmed; and, besides, are not secured by any middle power, or independent powerful nobility, interposed between them and the monarch.

Hume, at any rate, apart from politics, fully believes in the progress of enlightenment. The lowest point, in his opinion, had been reached in the tenth century, although there had been a promising gleam in the time of Alfred. Then there was very slow interrupted improvement; but with the Renaissance the 'barbarous ages' ended; and, he proclaims, 'we have at length reached the dawn of civility and science.' Something like the great day of Augustus, when the human mind was at its best, had again 'dawned,' and this was due, in a great degree, to the recovery of classic letters. Hume here throws in an unwonted compliment to the Roman clergy, who had in the dark ages saved so much of the treasure. Whatever may be thought of this pæan, it shows the breadth of view with which Hume regarded the course of history. When, at the end of each epoch, he reviews, however cursorily, the state of 'manners, finances, arms, commerce, arts, and sciences,' he is heralding the modern conception of his calling. He gives some space to trade and finance, and we remember how in his *Political Essays* he had shown himself a pioneer in economics. There are some scattered observations upon 'manners'; but the notion of a history recording the life of the common people was foreign to his age. Nor is there much about science; but Hume's words on Newton recall those sceptical ones in the *Dialogues*, in which he speaks of the 'inexplicable mystery' of things:

> While Newton seemed to draw off the veil from the mystery of nature, he showed at the same time the imperfections of the mechanical philosophy; and thereby restored her ultimate secrets to that obscurity in which they ever did and ever will remain.

His assortment of opinions upon authors is notable; they are as frank, as unborrowed, and as unashamed as those of Horace Walpole. They are tinged both with 'Augustan' and with Gallic prejudice. Hume joins the little band of eminent minds who refuse to be carried away by Shakespeare: Voltaire, Matthew Arnold, and Tolstoy. An 'allusion-book' of their protests, and of the dull dislikes or the niggling objections of less reputable writers, might be worth compiling. To appreciate Hume's point of view, we must remember that like Walpole he adored lucid grace and elegance; that not for him were the turbid elements in tragedy, or obsolete comic jests. His view of our Renaissance literature is summed up in the sentence, which contains no little truth, and in which he calls it

> a misfortune, the English writers were possessed of great genius, before they were endowed with any degree of taste.

This canon is applied to Shakespeare :

We perhaps admire the more those beauties, on account of their being surrounded with such deformities. . . . That want of taste which often prevails in his productions, and which gives way, only by intervals, to the irradiations of genius. . . . And there may even remain a suspicion that we overrate, if possible, the greatness of his genius ; in the same manner as bodies often appear more gigantic, on account of their being disproportioned and misshapen.

So too, whilst admitting the beauties of Spenser, Hume finds him ' peculiarly tiresome ' owing to the ' too great frequency of his descriptions and the languor of the stanza.' He is more at home when, after emitting a cool and balanced judgment on Milton and Cowley, he reaches the Restoration. Love, he says, was in the age of Charles the Second ' treated more as an appetite than as a passion ' ; and, better still, when speaking of the Roman satirists, he observes that

their freedom no more resembles the licentiousness of Rochester than the nakedness of an Indian does that of a common prostitute.

III

But all these matters are put away in ' appendices ' ; and the backbone of Hume's chronicle of the seventeenth century is naturally the political and religious struggle. We may be amused or revolted, as the case may be, by his external view of the popular cause and the Puritan temper. It is what we should expect from the essay *On Enthusiasm*. That phenomenon, he says in the *History*, is

surely the most curious spectacle presented by any history, and the most instructive as well as entertaining to a philosophical mind.

Sometimes he clearly states a paradox which his point of view disqualifies him from explaining. Of the Independents he says that they were the first Christian sect

which during its prosperity as well as its adversity always adopted the principle of toleration ; and it is remarkable that so reasonable a doctrine owed its origin, not to reasoning, but to the height of extravagance and fanaticism.

He does not seem to know of the campaign for toleration led within the fold by Chillingworth and Taylor. His picture of the popular leaders, and especially of Cromwell, whom he calls ' this fanatical hypocrite,' becomes a string of antitheses, or

unreconciled contradictions; and Hume seems to have an uneasy feeling that he is not accounting for the phenomena. He cannot deny that the 'fanatics' were sincere; and he saves himself by the comment that religious hypocrisy is

> generally unknown to the person himself; though more dangerous, it implies less falsehood than any other species of insincerity.

In all this, it must be granted, Hume was only stating more boldly than usual the conception of Cromwell which, in one form or another, was to be common to Whig and Tory for more than a century.

Certain kinds of Toryism, as we know, go well with scepticism; but the plea of the sceptic for the existing order is uncomfortably tinged with scorn. It is so with Hume; and nothing is more characteristic than his argument for an established church. When he says that he will 'take the matter a little higher,' and begins with a balanced disquisition, we know that he means mischief. After describing the religious warfare in the time of Henry the Eighth, he announces that he will consider 'why there must be an ecclesiastical order and a public establishment of religion in every civilised country.' There are, he proceeds, two kinds of profession: one, like that of the lawyer or doctor, which is maintained by the 'liberality of individuals,' the client or the patient; and the other, where it is not the interest of any individual to pay for services rendered, and which is therefore maintained by the state; such callings are the army, the navy, and the magistrature. Now it might seem, says Hume, that the clergy should belong to the former class; but that is an error. And why? A wise legislator would prevent this 'interested diligence of the clergy,' their zeal to earn their bread from their flocks. *That* way disaster lies. For every 'ghostly practitioner' would, in order to arouse the charity of the faithful, multiply spiritual stimulants. 'Enthusiasm' would be fostered. 'Every tenet will be adopted that best suits the disorderly affections of the human frame.' Therefore,

> the best and most advantageous composition which he [the civil magistrate] can make with the spiritual guides is to bribe their indolence, by assigning stated salaries to their profession, and rendering it superfluous for them to be farther active, than merely to prevent their flock from straying in quest of new pastures.

And Hume, for all his irony, means what he says; he has an impartial contempt for parson and minister alike; but stagnation, he believes, is better than fanaticism.

The *History of England*, often regarded simply as a remarkable piece of literature, is, despite all its drawbacks, more than that. Hume must be honoured as the first writer in English to conceive, however imperfectly, the *idea* of a national history. He tries to review, as we have seen, the material and intellectual state of the country at different periods, as well as to chronicle politics, war, and religious strife. He sees the whole record not as a mere series of events, but in the light of his own notion, peculiar as it may be, of human progress. And he writes in his best, his now long practised manner, gravely and yet lightly, with a sustained excellence, adroitly intermingling narrative, anecdote, and abstract discussion. Hence his book, unlike much 'scientific' history, is good to read. He can tell a story well, distilling it from whatever sources may be at hand. He likes tragic scenes, and can rise to such occasions better than we might expect from his equable and detached temper. He lingers over the last days of Mary of Scotland, and of Charles the First; and the executions of William Lord Russell and of Algernon Sidney strike a spark from the Tory Hume. It was he, we cannot doubt, who more than any writer imprinted these events on the English mind during several generations. The *History*, as noted before, was continued in rougher style, and with even less research, but still not without vigour, by Smollett, who brought the annals down to 1757; and it was carried on by yet other hands.

IV

Whilst Hume was finishing his chronicle, the second member of what Gibbon calls the 'triumvirate of British historians of the present age' was already on the scene: William Robertson [1] (1721-1793), afterwards Principal of Edinburgh University and Moderator of the General Assembly. The eager air of the capital, in the year 1759, sharpened intellectual production, and the example of Hume favoured historical inquiry. Hume himself was a member of that 'Select Society' which figures in Alexander Carlyle's *Autobiography* and in Dugald Stewart's *Account of the Life and Writings* of Robertson. The founder of this culture-club was the younger Allan Ramsay, the portrait-painter, who had by this time migrated to London. It included, besides Robertson and Hume, Adam Smith, John Home, Henry Home Lord Kames, Hugh Blair, and other Athenians who were writers of mark. There seems to have been much amenity and mutual toleration: Hume and Robertson were friends. From

the first Robertson's bent had been historical. His early sermon 'on the situation of the world at the time of Christ's appearance' already shows his temperate habit of mind and width of view. His first book, the *History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and of King James the Sixth* (1759), which had been long in hand, at once made his name, and was saluted both in England and in Scotland, receiving tributes from persons as different as Horace Walpole, Warburton, Garrick, and Hume himself.

Robertson's excellent and novel method, which he retained in his later histories, of prefacing the story with a sketch of its antecedents, and of suffixing his erudite notes and documents, served to lighten his text and to leave his canvas clear. Without the genius of Hume, or the 'careless, inimitable beauties' (again to quote Gibbon) of Hume's style, he was a much sounder investigator; and he also excels Hume in the talent of clearly and fairly presenting, from the sources at his disposal, the ravelled motives, both personal and political, of his *dramatis personae*. He can also, in tints which are quiet but not therefore dull, describe a great scene, or an episode; and the tale of Mary has often been worse told. The murders of Rizzio and Darnley, and the trial and last days of the Queen, are examples of his workmanship; and if it falls well short of greatness, and if Robertson is always a little too respectable—a Moderator confronted with primitive passions,—still, on such occasions, his narrative takes 'gayer colours, like an opal warmed.' Indeed, judicial as he might be, he was taxed with being too lenient to Mary. Robertson is much happier in such work, than in his somewhat flat portrayals of character. Of Mary he is capable of saying that she was 'formed with the qualities we love, not with the talents that we admire; she was an agreeable woman, rather than an illustrious queen.' His account has naturally been swamped, and is hardly now mentioned amongst the 'authorities'; but, considered as a piece of writing, and coming when it did, the *History of Scotland* (which extends to 1603) marks a step forward in historical composition. It also contains many signs of Robertson's next work. The review of the state of Europe in 1542 and the pages on the Scottish Reformation anticipate the larger treatment in the *History of Charles the Fifth*. Robertson's attitude to the change of faith is naïvely shown in the sentence,

> No sooner did mankind recover the capacity of exercising their reason, than religion was one of the first objects which drew their attention.

The assumptions that *reason* was all on the side of the reformers, and that their chief motive power was *reason*, are characteristic; Robertson takes little count of emotional, or spiritual, experience. But the same detachment makes him notably impartial, considering his point of view, in allotting praise or blame on all sides: a virtue that was presently to be tested on a larger scale.

His second book was much more amply designed. Like Gibbon, he wavered between several subjects before deciding. Hume wished that he would write biographies in the manner of Plutarch; George the Third, that he would attempt a history of England. Robertson, however, chose for himself, and chose well. Long since shelved as a product of pre-scientific times, the *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles the Fifth* (1769) has yet some of the qualities of a classic. It became known over Europe and was translated into several tongues. Its plan is to 'represent the great transactions of the reign,' and how they 'affected the political state of Europe.' The span directly covered is the lifetime of Charles, from 1500 to the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, which the Emperor just did not live to see. Considering his materials, which could not be sufficient, Robertson shows much skill in draughtsmanship. His theme is the violent swaying, this way and that, of the 'balance of power' between France and the Empire, and the continual jarring of the beam by the successive Popes, and Henry the Eighth, and the Italian cities, and the German princes. The religious history, in so far as it affects the story, is carefully interwoven. Robertson presents with his usual clearness the main moves in the dynastic and military drama. This, however, he does rather in diagram than in picture. His equable temper, which seems to rise only when he thinks of Popery, and his somewhat timid sense of the dignity of history, do not favour colour. Yet he has not lost his feeling for romance; and his narrative becomes less pale when he stops to describe the death of Bayard, or the murder of Mustapha, or the conspiracy of Fiesco. He has also a genuine sense of equity, and ignores neither the failings of Luther nor the virtues of the Jesuits. We do not expect him to understand, in either case, the fiery essence, or *igneus vigor*, of the men. A highly rational person, Robertson watches from his chair with no little interest the phenomena of unreason. Among such curiosities are chivalry, 'this singular institution,' and that 'extraordinary frenzy of the human mind' known as the Crusades. His account of the state of learning, of letters, and of the church in the 'dark ages,'

is itself a curiosity. It occurs in the long prelude, entitled a 'view of the progress of society in Europe' from the fall of Rome down to 1500.

This 'view,' with all its shortcomings, was of a kind not hitherto attempted in English. In one of his learned 'proofs and illustrations,' which are deftly packed away, Robertson gives thanks to the *Histoire générale* of Voltaire, while deploring that Voltaire had failed to quote his authorities. This kind of survey, in which Bossuet had set a great example, was a French product; and Robertson, without any pretence of wit or eloquence, had learned well the craft of exposition. His earlier sections are summary indeed; but in the third, describing the political conditions in 1500, he approaches his own ground. The opening sentence of the book anticipates almost verbally the subject of Gibbon:

> Two great revolutions have happened in the political state and in the manners of the European nations. The first was occasioned by the progress of the Roman power, the second by the subversion of it.

V

Gibbon repeatedly heaps praises upon Robertson, and once calls him a 'master-artist'; terms himself, perhaps without irony, the 'Lepidus' in the 'triumvirate'; and certainly used 'the nervous language, the well-turned periods, of Dr. Robertson' as one of the models for his own, far greater, style. The word 'nervous' may be a thought too complimentary; but the periods are even better 'turned' in Robertson's third work, the *History of America*, of which two volumes appeared in 1777, during the War of Independence. The first deals with the discoverers; the second with South America. The third, on the settlements of Virginia and New England, was complete as far as it went, but unfinished, and was published by Robertson's son in 1796. The historian had kept it back until the issue should be decided and some 'new order of things' established; and he had watched the strife, he tells us rather ambiguously, 'with the solicitude of a good citizen.' His prudence was needless; his story, put together from Hakluyt, Purchas, and later authorities, is void of offence. The adventures of John Smith are told with rising animation. A sketch of the Puritan movement at home preludes the history of New England; and the more cruel and fanatical doings of the settlers are related, with horror indeed, but without rhetoric

or sarcasm. We can imagine how Gibbon would have planted his sting in such a narrative. The life of Columbus stands out with an almost epical clearness and solidity; and so do the dreadful and bloody progresses of Cortes and Pizarro. As before, there are long intervening chapters where the chronicle pauses. The manners, the religion, and the polity of the natives in both Americas are reviewed at length. Robertson, as ever, took pains with his authorities; and in a preface to the whole work tells us how he had made successful inquiries in Vienna, St. Petersburg, and the New World; and how one great treasury, the archives of Simancas, had been jealously closed to him. The *History of America* was admirable pioneering work, and is Robertson's most finished composition.

He also, in his last years, produced a briefer monograph, a *Historical Disquisition concerning the Knowledge which the Ancients had of India* (1791), of which the purpose was humane as well as erudite. Like Burke, he is in sympathy with the Indians; he protests against the British habit of treating them as 'an inferior race of men'; and he exclaims, with unusual fervour, that if his book can in the least

> render their character more respectable and their condition more happy, I shall close my literary labours with the satisfaction of thinking that I have not lived or written in vain.

Robertson, quoting passages from the *Sakuntala*, as translated by Sir William Jones, and from other classics, and also texts on transmigration and monotheism, tries to reveal the Indian mind, its quality, its subtlety, and its antiquity. Some of the ethical maxims lead him to say that 'the distinctive doctrines of the Stoic school were taught in India many ages before the birth of Zeno.' He describes the polytheistic scheme, and urges that it is 'preposterous' to expect the unity of God to be discovered all at once. Such an essay, of course, is tentative enough; but it shows how the recognition of the East was drifting in through many channels, before the end of the century.

There is little to add upon Robertson's style, so uniformly lucid, often luminous, never inspired. Johnson remarked that if it be 'faulty, he owes it to me; that is, in having too many words, and too big ones.' Sometimes, no doubt, he says a true thing in a pompous way, as when he describes the orgies of the Anabaptists:

> The excesses of enthusiasm have been observed in every age to lead to sensual gratifications. . . . By a monstrous and almost in-

credible conjunction, voluptuousness was ingrafted on religion, and dissolute riot accompanied the austerities of fanatical devotion.

But these *Ramblerisms* are not common, and diminish as time goes on. A fair example of Robertson's gift is the passage which Keats, in his lines upon Cortez, so happily misremembered :

> At length the Indians assured them, that from the top of the next mountain they should discover the ocean which was the object of their wishes. When, with infinite toil, they had climbed up the greater part of that steep ascent, Balboa commanded his men to halt, and advanced alone to the summit, that he might be the first who should enjoy a spectacle which he had so long desired. As soon as he beheld the South Sea stretching in endless prospect below him, he fell on his knees, and lifting up his hands to Heaven, returned thanks to God, who had conducted him to a discovery so beneficial to his country, and so honourable to himself. His followers, observing his transports of joy, rushed forward to join in his wonder, exultation, and gratitude. They held on their course to the shore with great alacrity, when Balboa, advancing up to the middle in the waves with his buckler and sword, took possession of that ocean in the name of the King his master, and vowed to defend it, with these arms, against all his enemies.

The fates of the three chief historians of this age, at the hands of the learned, have differed very noticeably. The philosophy of Hume, which is still attacked as well as expounded, cannot be said to be extinct ; but his *History*, while often reprinted and abridged, has not had the honours of modern scientific editing. Neither have any of the works of Robertson ; and his popularity, immense in his own day, has had a shorter lease than Hume's. It is otherwise with Gibbon, who has been presented to us corrected by the best historical scholarship of our own age, and whose work, after all possible abatements, has been pronounced, by that same scholarship, to stand. That it stands as literature is agreed on all sides. It is not, like the writing of Goldsmith, difficult to date ; the English is not the English that all men, at any time, would write if only they ' had the mind ' ; it is English that wears the stamp, first of all, of certain decades, and secondly of Gibbon's own manner, of his inborn bent for elaboration. It endures none the less ; it will always have the power to irritate certain minds, and will always, surely, be read. ' Whatever else is read,' said Freeman, ' Gibbon must be read too.' He spoke of the substance, but the remark is true also of the form. The two together ensure permanence ; and hence Gibbon has received different measure from any other English historian of his own century.

VI

The quiet life of that true humanist, Edward Gibbon[1] (1737-1794), falls into five acts of unequal length, with a prologue and an epilogue. Born in Putney, he had a poor schooling, but was a precocious reader, and became a self-taught *savant*. He was still a boy when he plunged not only into the romance of history but into the dry chronology and geography that were requisite for his unknown task. 'The dynasties of Assyria and Egypt were my top and cricket-ball.' Gibbon, as he says, always cherished 'a strong and constant passion for letters.' The golden ages of Rome and Athens, together with the Renaissance, he was always to consider the most luminous phases in the record of mankind. After his short futile stay at Oxford and his youthful conversion to the Roman church, Gibbon was packed off to Lausanne, to be under the care of a Calvinist clergyman, Pavilliard ; and the first act opens :

> Such as I am, in genius or learning or manners, I owe my creation to Lausanne ; it was in that school, that the statue was discovered in the block of marble.

1. 1753-1758. Within two years Gibbon had reverted to the Protestant fold ; but out of that he slowly drifted into a kind of anti-clerical deism. In 1756 he resolved, and almost managed, to read through *all* the Latin classics, 'historians, poets, orators, and philosophers, in chronological series.' His bent was already historical, but as yet he had no aim. In Greek he had to be his own teacher. French, meantime, became his second language, and it left some traces upon his English. He lived quietly, making infinite notes, and enjoying the 'glories of the landskip.' Commanded by his father, he resigned his affianced, the beautiful Mlle Curchod,[2] who was afterwards to become Mme Necker and to remain Gibbon's friend. He was never to marry at all, though he more than once dallied with the project.

2. 1758-1763. During the next five years Gibbon's headquarters were at his father's house at Buriton, in Hampshire ; and during two of them his visible calling was that of a captain in the local militia. But he found time to ponder and reject many subjects for an historical work, including the third crusade, the Black Prince, Sir Philip Sidney, and Sir Walter Raleigh. None of these were big enough for Gibbon. In 1761 he published his *Essai sur l'Etude de la Littérature*, a discursive little book in somewhat jerky sentences, which shows the

writer's ardour for letters and also his interest in applied philosophy. He commends the study of Cicero, Tacitus, Fontenelle, and Montesquieu, authors who are all mentioned in the *Decline and Fall.*

3. 1763-1765. For two years and a half Gibbon travelled, pausing for a twelvemonth at Lausanne. The *Essai* had won him a good reception in Paris, where he met many *philosophes* and persons of fashion. In 1764 he was in Rome, and found himself 'almost in a dream.' On October 15, in the Capitol, he tells us that 'the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind'; but the execution was to be long delayed.

4. 1765-1783. This period was passed in England, first at Buriton and afterwards in London. Gibbon had still no definite programme in life, and was not independent until his father died in 1770. For some time he could not settle to a task, though he continued to accumulate lore and wrote a number of dissertations and reviews. He did begin a history of the Swiss revolution, composed in French, but was discouraged from proceeding. With his cherished friend Deyverdun he started the short-lived *Mémoires littéraires de la Grande-Bretagne.* In a lively biting pamphlet he attacked Warburton's mystical reading of the Sixth Æneid—'the most pleasing and perfect composition,' says Gibbon, 'of Latin poetry.' He went a good deal into society, and passes over the scene of Boswell and Walpole. He sat in the Commons, and gave 'many a sincere and silent vote' to Lord North against the revolted colonies. His eight sessions he regarded as a 'school of civil prudence,' most useful to the historian, and also as a means of obtaining 'la place honnête et commode d'un Lord de Trade.' But Gibbon, all the time, was at his true task. He passed like a steam-roller over his huge masses of material, read all the accessible authorities ancient and modern, mused long over the great design and its proportions, and rewrote many chapters. At this stage he was confining himself to the subversion of the western empire, and to the first five centuries of our era; but in his preface he sketched the entire plan of the work. The first quarto volume, in 1776, brought him instantaneous fame. The full title was *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.* In 1779 he issued a *Vindication* of his fifteenth and sixteenth chapters against the swarm of orthodox assailants. When his sinecure was abolished, Gibbon again retreated to Lausanne for the sake of leisure and economy.

5. Here, from 1783 to 1793, he lived and worked in comfort.

After four years he took leave of his 'old and agreeable companion,' wrote the last line of his book on June 27, 1787, and paid a passing visit to England to publish, in the next year, his last three volumes. The scheme was accomplished, which in 1776 had been only a 'hope,' and in 1782 a 'serious resolution.' The record now came down to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. He then began to draft, over and over again, the *Memoirs of the Life of Edward Gibbon*. He was only fifty-six when he returned home for good; and the rest is epilogue. He dreamed of writing the lives of the Englishmen who had been most 'eminent in arts and arms' since the time of Henry the Eighth. But Gibbon was tired, and also fatally ill; and early in 1794 he died, in the spirit of a philosopher.[1] A memoir written in 1791 closes with a sentence on 'the vanity of authors who presume the immortality of their name and writings.' But in his will there is a clause which surely gives his real mind: 'Shall I be accused of vanity, if I add that a monument is superfluous?'

VII

A man's autobiography is not usually compiled by another person; but the mosaic published in 1796 by Lord Sheffield (John Baker Holroyd) is a most dexterous piece of craftsmanship, which will always hold the public ear. It is pieced out of six separate drafts left by the historian. These have much in common, but they end at different dates of Gibbon's life, and they vary in scale, language, and contents. All of them are indispensable; none are final; and they were not printed in full for a century. Lord Sheffield omitted some of the raciest passages and at times watered down or otherwise altered Gibbon's language; but he preserved the essence and continuity of the work. Gibbon's candour and his air of finality impose on every reader. The artist in his portrait of himself spares none of the foibles of which he is conscious. He also tolerates them, just as if he were describing some historical personage to whom he wishes to be fair and not too severe. Irony is everywhere, and Gibbon sometimes inflicts on himself, as he so often does upon others, a dexterous elegant scratch:—'I still shrunk from the press with the terrors of virgin modesty'; 'The injustice was in my own fancy, and the imaginary monster [his stepmother] was an amiable and deserving woman.' But the general tone is that of a solid and chastened and humorous complacency, which accords with the musical even purr of the language. Such a man, we exclaim, cannot easily be shaken or

ruffled by anything; and he himself forestalls much of what can be said against him. Perhaps he had a shrewd idea that no other biographer of Gibbon would be read. Yet one is certainly wanted to-day. There is rich material in the letters (now published in full), in the six memoirs, and in the minor works. Moreover, Gibbon has contrived not so much to flatter his own character as to do it some wrong. In the memoir he poses, with a certain inimitable expression of smugness; in the letters he is less upon his guard. His familiar notes to Holroyd are not in what Horace Walpole calls his 'sedulous enamelled style,' but more simple, and even jaunty.

His grotesque side, as a man, was not spared by the *farceurs* of his day like the younger Colman, or by the hostile Boswell, or by feminine watchers like Miss Burney. There are stray notices by Walpole that bear witness, like a certain well-known silhouette, to the comic presence of the man. We know the little round mouth, the figure like a Chinese idol, the rolling periods, and the emphatically tapped snuffbox. There is also ample proof of Gibbon's good nature and politeness, and of the excellence of his talk. The Holroyd family may have been partial; but Mme du Deffand, who was harder to satisfy, was pleased with Gibbon's address. His talk must have been somewhat like the footnotes in the *Decline and Fall*. A clear impression of it is given by Sir James Bland Burges,[1] in a long spineless sentence that would have horrified the ear of Gibbon:

> His conversation was not what Dr. Johnson would have called *talk*. There was no interchange of ideas, for no one had a chance of replying, so fugitive, so variable was his mode of conversing, which consisted of points, anecdotes, and epigrammatic thrusts, all more or less to the purpose, and all pleasantly said with a French air and manner which gave them great piquancy, but which were withal so desultory and disconnected, that though each separately was extremely amusing, the attention of his auditors sometimes flagged before his own resources were exhausted.

The worthy Burges unluckily does not record any of the 'points and thrusts.' Many things have been said against Gibbon as a man. A certain commonness of outlook in worldly matters it would be hard to deny. We do not expect Burke's generosity or Johnson's humanity. But he is also said to be wanting in passion and romance and generally in grandeur of soul. He tells us himself that he is 'not very susceptible of enthusiasm,' and he is certainly frigid towards romantic love, religious emotion, and political idealism. But Gibbon is not really batrachian. His passions are intellectual, and therefore unusual.

He is not cool when he contemplates the art and language of the Athenians, or the free polity of the Roman republic, or the ruins of the city, or the occasional virtues of an emperor, or the patience of Boethius, or the death of Hector or of Hosein. Also, in his own way, he is a proud Englishman and patriot, with a proper conceit of his country. 'Britain,'[1] he wrote in the last year of his life,

> perhaps is the only powerful and wealthy state which has ever possessed the inestimable secret of uniting the benefits of order with the blessings of freedom.

The remark does not seem an original one, until we remember from how high a watch-tower Gibbon looked out upon the field of history. Also his few personal affections were strong and unchanging; its objects were his aunt Catherine Porten, his stepmother Mrs. Gibbon, and his friends Holroyd and Deyverdun. We end by liking him, and by feeling that, besides being a great ironist and investigator, he has something in common with the poets who chanted the falls of princes or the 'ruins of Rome.'

VIII

Gibbon's ruling tastes and antipathies can be traced early in his life. At twenty-one, for his own benefit, he made an outline of the history of the world from the ninth century A.D. to the fifteenth. His comparative coldness to the Middle Ages, like his love of the classic world and of the Renaissance, is soon evident; and the celebrated style and irony are already audible. In the fifteenth century, he remarks,

> The existence of a Supreme Being was indeed acknowledged; his attributes were minutely, and even indecently, canvassed in the schools; but he was allowed a very small share in the public worship, or in the administration of the universe.[2]

Gibbon's liveliness often breaks out in dusty corners. The *Antiquities of the House of Brunswick* is not a promising title, but the treatise conceals eulogies on Ariosto and Tasso, and also upon Leibniz. The paper on the Sixth Æneid turns aside from the heresies of Warburton to the glories of Virgil; and Gibbon, whilst rejoicing in the poetry, takes occasion to point out the attenuated nature of the pantheistic deity, the *mens infusa per artus*; which 'scarcely retains any property of a spiritual substance.' He further allows himself a fling at the 'impious Spinoza,' whom he does not appear to have studied. In the

journal he kept of his own reading, Gibbon, like so many others in the 'age of reason,' praises the author of the *De Sublimitate*, saying justly that Longinus,[1] when commenting on a beautiful passage, has found a middle way between a 'general encomium, which leaves nothing behind it,' and an 'exact anatomy' of the 'beauties.' 'He tells me his own feelings upon reading it, and tells them with such energy, that he communicates them.' Again, he explains his conception of the historical temper, which obeys

> that almost evangelical maxim of forgetting friends, country, religion, of giving merit its due praise, and embracing truth wherever it is to be found.

A chapter could be written upon Gibbon's admirations and aversions in literature. The footnotes to the *Decline and Fall* are sown with allusions to the writers of his own century, and they show that he was no blind follower of its gods. He is justly severe on the bigotry of Johnson,[2] and also on that of Voltaire; speaks of Hume indeed with all honour, but of Montesquieu critically; refers with ironical caution to the 'poems of Ossian';[3] and thoroughly relishes the 'wicked wit,' the 'levity and learning,' of Bayle. His anti-episcopal habit of mind cannot blind him to the merits of Lowth, whom he praises for the 'learning, taste, ingenuity, and temperate enthusiasm' of his lectures on Hebrew poetry; or of his own opponent Bishop Watson, who shines out among the Chelsums and Apthorpes. Gibbon, from his chair, passes judgment on the dead as if they were alive, and on the living as if they were dead, always in the same inscriptional style, which is intended to wear, and which does wear, so well. In this spirit he writes the *Decline and Fall*, and he wishes that great fabric to outlive the ruins of Rome which it commemorates. I use the familiar terms of Renaissance poets, because the book, though it came so late in the day, is itself one of the greatest productions of the 'revival of learning.' It relates

> the greatest, perhaps, and most awful scene in the history of mankind. The various causes and progressive effects are connected with many of the events most interesting in human annals: the artful policy of the Caesars, who long maintained the name and image of a free republic; the disorders of military despotism; the rise, establishment, and sects, of Christianity; the foundation of Constantinople; the division of the monarchy; the invasion and settlements of the barbarians of Germany and Scythia; the institution of the civil law; the character and religion of Mahomet;

the restoration and decay of the Western empire of Charlemagne; the crusades of the Latins in the East; the conquests of the Saracens and the Turks; the ruin of the Greek empire; the state and revolutions of Rome in the Middle Age.

IX

It is not reasonable to compare it with the works of the pure imagination, for there is no common measure; but amongst those of 'applied literature' it has no rival in its own land and age. Each of the *Lives of the Poets* is to be prized; but taken together, they form an unstrung heap. Each group of Burke's writings—on America, on India, on France—may well be regarded as a single masterpiece, but none of them is on the grand scale of Gibbon's work; nor has the *Wealth of Nations* any such classic architecture. The dialogues of Berkeley and Hume do not come into competition. And for scale and range, for learning and mental force, for style and construction, for *achievement* if all these be reckoned together, Gibbon has no rival, at least amongst English historians. The nearest is Macaulay. Unlike Macaulay, he has won the tribute of being edited and reviewed in the full light of later knowledge. This is less likely to happen to Robertson or Hume; too much of their history would have to be rewritten. Gibbon is read as history, and as literature; as speaking for his own time, and as marking a great milestone in historical studies. The later eighteenth century cannot be understood without some knowledge of his powers and deficiencies.

The deficiencies are now well understood. The standard modern edition indicates the chief advances in learning [1] made since Gibbon's time. His account is pronounced to have been enlarged, rectified, or superseded at a hundred points. To this process he gave the first impulse himself. In the next generation, Finlay's *History of Greece* began the deeper study of economic history, in a field hardly touched by Gibbon; and later still Milman retold the story of Christianity in the West from an opposite point of view. Since then the pyramidal labours of continental and English scholars have transformed the face of historical study. It is known that Gibbon's whole account of the Byzantine empire must be readjusted, that he had not access to the requisite Slavonic sources, that his lordly pages on Mohammed are based on a discredited authority; that 'no discreet inquirer would go' to him 'for his ecclesiastical history,' and that he stands corrected in a mass of details. For

all this, no one asserts that Gibbon is buried, or denies his wonderfully accurate command of the knowledge available at the time, or the purity of his critical conscience. It is agreed that as a matter of science, and not merely of style, great masses of the *Decline and Fall*, especially in its earlier volumes, stand fast.

Another class of objections is obvious. Gibbon's general view of history, and his philosophy of human affairs—is it to be called obsolete ? Had he such a philosophy ? The answer is not so simple. Certainly he had no metaphysical background. A few thinkers like Plato and Leibniz he admires, but admires from the outside. He seems to think their abstruser reasonings a sheer waste of effort. He has no providential reading of history, and, as will appear, no particular lay substitute for it. His temper is alien to any consoling theory that may involve an act of faith. Lessing and Herder were his contemporaries, but he did not know of them ; the conception, of which they were the pioneers, that the human spirit slowly advances from goal to goal, Gibbon would have greeted, we may judge, with new shafts of irony. Nor did he live to read the antichristian Condorcet, who hated the churches worse than he did himself, but whose *Esquisse* traces out and prophesies the endless progress of mankind. Gibbon, the most unprophetic of men, does not move at all in this kingdom of the clouds. Still less does he believe, with Rousseau, in an early Saturnian age of peace and virtue, which mankind must recover at its peril. His view of the abject state of primitive man is much more like that of Hobbes.

Still, Gibbon speaks of his own ' propensity to view and to enjoy every object in the most favourable light.' His optimism is indeed of a wary kind. He does believe—what is obvious—that man has advanced from the state of the ' human savage ' ; and also, that man can never relapse into that state. The passage (ch. xxxviii.) is one of the most curious in his writings. Genius *may* be extinguished ; the ' complex machinery ' of civilisation, its institutions, refinements, sciences, and arts, *may* perhaps be ' decayed by time or injured by violence.' But, at the very worst, the simpler, the necessary crafts and callings, such as the use of fire, the chase, fishing, the rudiments of tilling and of the mechanic trades, can never perish. And then, by a considerable leap, he says, *therefore*—

> We may therefore acquiesce in the pleasing conclusion that every age of the world has increased, and still increases, the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the human race.

Gibbon had remarked elsewhere that history is 'little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind.' But the inconsistency is only apparent and is explained by his actual choice of subject. In one of his most musical sentences, he adds that progress, though real, is not continuous or without long and dire relapses:

> Ages of laborious ascent have been followed by a moment of rapid downfall . . . the splendid days of Augustus and Trajan were eclipsed by a cloud of ignorance; and the Barbarians subverted the laws and palaces of Rome.

But this is just the subject of the *Decline and Fall*, an 'awful' subject, as Gibbon truly terms it. The happier periods, in which humanity made a step forward, lie either before or behind the long span of time which he selected: in the golden periods of Greece and Rome, or in the fourteenth century, at the dawn of the Renaissance. His theme was the long black interval, not the brighter prelude and sequel. In the classic world, he found that liberty, toleration, light, art and letters had flourished; to be lost, and only recovered after fourteen hundred years. The decline and fall of the empire was the temporary decline of human intelligence and fall of civilisation. Its historian must record the 'triumph of barbarism and religion.'

X

Such is Gibbon's general point of view; and it suggests at once the two great reproaches under which he has suffered. One is his imperfect sympathy with the Middle Ages; the other, even more far-reaching, concerns his attitude towards historical Christianity. As to the first, it is possible to overstate his indifference to the mediaeval genius. Doubtless he was little touched by the impulse that was helping to transform the poetry of his own time. He is half-hearted towards 'the sublime but unequal Dante.'[1] Ruskin or Morris could hardly be cooler towards the Renaissance than Gibbon is to most of the saints, mystics, poets, and romancers. He may have a word of praise for Thomas Warton, but he passes on. Still, as his account of chivalry shows, he could be stirred by romance. More than once he rebukes the prejudices of the age of reason. In praising Bernard of Clairvaux he observes:

> A philosophic age has abolished, with too liberal and indiscriminate disdain, the honours of these spiritual heroes. The meanest of them are distinguished by some energies of the mind;

they were at least superior to their votaries and disciples; and in the race of superstition they attained the prize for which such numbers contended.

These, it may be said, are small mercies; but Gibbon really hates certain kinds of fanaticism, and once he calls Voltaire 'in his way a bigot, an intolerant bigot.' To retort that he is a bigot himself, opens a larger question. The springs of Gibbon's hostility to the churches, and the nature of his semblance of a creed, may easily be mistaken, when he says, with his usual candour, 'Of the pains and pleasures of a spiritual life, *I* am ill qualified to speak.'

He holds in respect the first article of natural religion; and though he is not explicit, there is no need to charge him with cowardice. He praises the 'rational enthusiasm' which inspired the adoration of Mahomet for 'an infinite and eternal being.' He does not sound the note of the dogmatic atheists like Holbach. He himself is probably a deist of a somewhat shadowy kind. The immortality of the soul he styles 'a specious and noble tenet.' 'Specious,' a Latinism, meaning here splendid and plausible, is a non-committal word. Further, it is a doctrine 'dictated by nature, approved by reason, and received by superstition.' On the death of Lady Sheffield, the 'Sheffelina' of his gayer letters, Gibbon writes to the widower:

> She is now at rest; and if there be a future state, her mild virtues have surely entitled her to the reward of pure and perfect felicity.

Judgment is gently suspended. There is little doubt, however, that he thought revelation a myth. At any rate he always implies that the niceties of dogma have always disabled, if they have sharpened, the reason, and have been a prime cause of persecution, bloodshed, and war. They have begotten the two great evils described by Hume as superstition and enthusiasm. The first term, in this parlance, means the rule and doctrines of ecclesiastics; the second, in Johnson's dictionary definition, is 'a vain confidence of divine favour and communication.' These, Gibbon seems to say, are lasting incurable ailments of the human spirit. But they are part of his story, and they have to be chronicled; they ministered greatly to the 'decline and fall.' And Gibbon narrates their history, from the outside, in a tone of legal precision and cutting moderation. The great disputes over the Trinity and the Incarnation, which made so much of secular history, are, if the expression may be used, carefully pinned out. They are historical phenomena, like the cult of

Zoroaster, or like that codification of the Roman Law, Gibbon's exposition of which has won the applause of the authorities. But if we are to take our bearings with Gibbon we must remember that his aversion to theologians rests, in part, upon his belief that the Gospel had been perverted by the churches. He sincerely accepts its 'pure and simple maxims,' and its 'pure, benevolent, and universal system of ethics.' He truly believes in peace, moderation, and charity. In his much-assailed fifteenth chapter, he assigns a cleaner moral teaching as one of the 'secondary causes' of the success of the faith. And, above all, the 'benevolent system' is not only true; nay, even if it were not true, it would be useful. 'A prudent magistrate might observe with pleasure the progress of a religion which diffused' such virtues. But, he urges, monkish asceticism, and the slighting of 'that faithful companion, the body,' formed no part of the original teaching.

One bishop, Watson, almost the only opponent whom he respected, justly taxed Gibbon with omitting, amongst the 'secondary causes,' the belief of the early Christians that their doctrine was *true*. Another omission is harder to describe. Gibbon tries to set forth every doctrine with precision. But he has little notion that any doctrine, however baseless or perverted, can have its root in a spiritual need. He therefore misses the hidden motive power that prompted even the perversions. His calculations do not explain the phenomena. The whole impulse of later thought has been to seek for such an explanation, whether on orthodox or on purely naturalistic lines. In the same way Gibbon sees no trace of growth or development (even for the worse) in theological doctrines. He takes each one as it comes, and picks it to pieces, and goes on to the next. And this, undoubtedly, has got to be done; but the guiding thread (not necessarily implying any progress) is missed. He does, however, fairly recognise that the forces of unreason may by chance and without any credit to themselves or to Providence subserve a happy end. The 'principle of the crusades was a savage fanaticism,' and they 'checked, rather than forwarded, the maturity of Europe'; yet they broke down the slavery of the masses who were chained to the soil, neither citizens nor men; they furthered the mental intercourse of East and West; they led indirectly and in the long run to the transplantation of the 'musical and prolific' language of Greece, and of the treasures concealed in it. Gibbon's picture of the early Renaissance is most brilliant, and his spirits and his eloquence mount as he approaches the coronation of Petrarch.

XI

Gibbon's ideal of historical writing becomes plainer if we approach the *Decline and Fall* as a work of art. History gave him, ready made, the subject of an epic with a tragic close. Dante's mediaeval definition of a tragedy fits the scene. The opening is prosperous ; the age of the Antonines is the happiest on record. The ending, twelve centuries later, is noisome and dreadful, is *foetida et horribilis* ; for the Turk rules in the Eastern capital, and superstition, armed with the temporal sword, is rampant in the West. Meantime passages of relief and suspense, as befits a tragedy, delay the end ; but the shades deepen after each hour of recovery in the times of Diocletian, of Constantine, of Valentinian, of Majorian, of Justinian, and of Charlemagne. The North and East hem in the empire, the teachings of philosophy and freedom fade. And yet, as in Shakespeare, before the close there comes the hint and promise of a revival. This comparison may not seem fanciful if the arrangement and perspective of the *Decline and Fall* be well studied.

Gibbon's sense of order, and his cunning instinct for relief and variety, are unchallenged. In the preface to his first volume he lays out the whole survey in advance. There are to be three great sections. The first closes with the barbarian conquest of Rome, towards the opening of the sixth century ; the second, with the reign of Charlemagne, at the beginning of the eighth. The third includes some six centuries and a half, and ends in 1453 ; but the scale is here different, and this portion, which is much more rapidly covered, is declared, in spite of some magnificent chapters, to be the most seriously corroded by modern research. But in the last three chapters the story returns to Rome, where it began ; and in the very last the wrecks of the city are described. Gibbon, in imagination, sits three centuries earlier in the spot where he had sat in the Capitol and listened to the barefooted friars singing.

The staple of every history must be narrative, and its law is movement. But every historian must rest in order to portray, to expound, and to reason. A different sort of mastery is required for each of these purposes. Gibbon, as a writer, is a master at every point. To begin with, he shows much generalship in timing his halts. The chapters that relieve the march are most skilfully placed, and are of several kinds. Some are concrete descriptions : of Rome or Constantinople, or of the Germans, the Huns, the Arabs, and the Mongols. Others, like the summary of the Persian religion, are more abstract ; and the

chapters on the Christian heresies are leisured and elaborate. The most important are those on the Arian controversy, on the conflicting doctrines of the Incarnation, on the Iconoclasts, and on the Paulicians. The tone is akin to that of Bayle, from whose articles on the same themes, in his *Dictionary*, Gibbon must have caught something of his own 'solemn sneer'; but the style, of course, is more flowing and brilliant, and the anti-theological spirit is less furtive. Gibbon seems to disarticulate, with a certain passion, the skeleton of a creed, and to hold up the skull in triumph.

His chronicle owes its effect not only to its harmony of style and arrangement, but also to a special trait of his imagination. This may be described as a love of wide spaces and vast numbers. Gibbon thinks in terms of centuries and of dynasties; he sees all things in masses; he likes an immense mileage, a capital covering 'about two thousand English acres,' a monster army traversing a continent, a migration of myriads, prodigious massacres, and a map crowded with exotic and reverberating names. Like Marlowe, he takes fire over the advance of Timour; and his chance blank verse, 'a pyramid of ninety thousand heads,' might well have come out of *Tamburlaine*. He has been taxed with caring too much for these pageants, and for externals generally. This is true; and yet, a sense of size, colour, and luxury is not less precious in an historian than in a poet; and Gibbon is so far within the contemporary movement of romance that he answers to the call of the East, in the age of Sir William Jones and of *Vathek*. He freely uses Simon Ockley's vivid *History of the Saracens* (1708-1757), which had long had the popular ear.

XII

His English has been too freely blamed for the faults of his imitators. Its own faults are not far to seek; but most of them are such as beseem a master, even as a sultan is required to show a certain largeness in his vices. They are partly explained by his fondness, already mentioned, for magnitude of scale. Big areas, big periods, big numbers, and also big words. There must be a diction, a cast of sentence, and a rhythm, that will hold out over fourteen centuries. The dangers are evident; and there is little to add to those often-quoted words of Porson, of whom Gibbon says that 'the sweetness of his praise is tempered with a reasonable mixture of acid':

In endeavouring to avoid vulgar terms he too frequently dignifies

trifles, and clothes common thoughts in a splendid dress that would be rich enough for the noblest ideas.

This reminds us of Coleridge's objection to the close of Wordsworth's *Daffodils*, and to his calling the child a 'mighty prophet' in the *Immortality* ode; no words are left for any greater occasion. An instance, and a symbol, of Gibbon's habit is his use of 'the purple' for the imperial power. But his conception of the grand historical style, if not always pure, is never mean. The result is the most remarkable *made* style in the language. 'Many experiments were made before I could hit the middle tone between a dull chronicle and a rhetorical declamation.' Jeffrey, in reading Macaulay, could not imagine 'where he got that style'; but the answer is easier in the case of Gibbon. His general models are near at hand, in Latin, in French, and in English.

The periods of the *Decline and Fall* are often like those of Cicero or Livy, wonderfully translated. Gibbon was steeped in the music of the ample sentence with its dependent members carefully poised, coupled, tripled, and contrasted. Among historians, his idol is Tacitus, whose every sentence, he says, is 'pregnant with the deepest observations and the most lively images,' and whose works 'will delight and instruct the most distant posterity.' He is 'the first of historians who applied the science of philosophy to the study of facts.' Tacitus packs and concentrates; but Gibbon, whose writing is continuous and expansive, might learn from Tacitus the craft, so essential for avoiding monotony, of pausing for a point or epigram, to infix a sting. This is a craft that distinguishes Gibbon from his dull followers. He was also probably influenced by the flowing and noble manner of Bossuet's *Histoire universelle*: a work, be it added, whose main proposition, namely that the final purpose of Providence was to establish the faith and rule of the church, was inverted by Gibbon. In England, too, as we have seen, Latinism had long been in the air. The Ciceronian habit of words had been surprisingly well caught by Bolingbroke, who resisted the preference of his age for short and sociable sentences. Bolingbroke's collected works came out in 1754, when Johnson was already in the field with the *Ramblers*. But the clank of Johnson's balanced clauses would chiefly teach Gibbon what to avoid; they have none of the continuity, ease, or undulation, which he sought. And deeply as he admired Robertson's periods, they leave the ear uninterested, and are not very cunningly constructed. Familiar with all these kinds of

periodic writing, Gibbon built upon them and made a new technique of his own :

> It has always been my practice to cast a long paragraph in a single mould, to try it by my ear, to deposit it in my memory, but to suspend the action of the pen till I had given the last polish to my work.

Lord Sheffield tells us that even before writing a letter the historian 'occasionally would walk several times about his apartment before he had rounded a period to his taste.' We must fancy Charles Lamb's comment on such doings ; but Gibbon was a thoroughbred workman. He planned *downwards*, from the whole to the part, from the book to the chapter, from the chapter to the paragraph, and from that to the sentence. He aimed at unity and harmony of effect, and also at great internal variety. One of his devices is a *crescendo* in his clauses ; they lengthen out as they proceed :

> The exiles returned, the proselytes multiplied, the temples were restored with increasing splendour, and Isis and Serapis at length resumed their place among the Roman deities.

A more pervading habit is the splitting of the sentence into groups of two, or three, or four balanced members. Gibbon does not always use long words, but he nearly always yokes his sentences in pairs :

> Attached, either from birth or long habit, to the climate and manners of Gaul, they loved and admired Julian ; they despised, and perhaps hated, the emperor ; they dreaded the laborious march, the Persian arrows, and the burning desert of Asia.

Such combinations are endless ; it may be simplest to print a few sentences in the form of an inscription to show a typical arrangement :

> A chosen society of philosophers, men of
> a liberal education and curious condition,
> might silently meditate, and temperately discuss,
> in the gardens of Athens or the library of Alexandria,
> the abstruse questions of metaphysical science.
> The lofty speculations, which
> neither convinced the understanding nor agitated the passions
> of the Platonists themselves
> were carelessly overlooked by
> the idle, the busy, and even the studious
> part of mankind. . . .
> . . . A theology, which

it was incumbent to believe which it was impious to doubt,
and which might be dangerous, and even fatal, to mistake,
became the familiar topic
of private meditation and popular discourse.

All this laborious inlaying and symmetry, kept up through many volumes, has its risks; many readers find the result monotonous; but I confess that I think it carries the *Decline and Fall* through magnificently. It is Gibbon's rhythm that saves him, and no one else has really caught it. It has more than once been dissected; but its general character is that of a slow undulation, with long intervals between the weighted syllables, and with an artful spacing of English 'trochees,' 'amphibrachs' and 'pæons.' This cadence is bound up with, and powerfully encourages, Gibbon's liking for polysyllables of learned origin. It also lends itself to the pomp of periphrasis. In the sentence quoted above, another man would have said 'to remember it, but not to write it down.' This is too abrupt for Gibbon; who must expand the words into 'to deposit it in my memory, but to suspend the action of the pen.' The change is bad, no doubt; but it shows us the kind of music that appealed to the writer. The alterations of text made in the second edition of the first volume are prompted by the same instinct.

XIII

Gibbon's actual English differs from that of his own time in many small ways which are mostly traceable to a Latinising or Gallicising habit. Sometimes he talks Latin: 'the tribunes were commissioned to take his *devoted* life'; and sometimes French: 'If Tacitus had *assisted at* this assembly.' Now and then he appears to coin his own English: 'The inventor was *confined to eat* of nothing else'; 'a long *series of oppression*.' Such locutions, though sprinkled rarely, are rather numerous in their sum, and they give a faintly exotic air to Gibbon's page. But on the whole he Gallicises much less than Hume and Latinises much less than Johnson. His variety of Roman English is wonderful, and is his own; and Roman it is, even if only *restored* Roman; and the style befits the great enduring aqueduct that he made to span the centuries between the old world and the new.

Unlike ninety per cent. of historians, Gibbon was honestly afraid of being dull. He confesses that the second and third of his quarto volumes were 'more prolix and less entertaining than the first.' They contained nothing so provocative to

divines as the two notorious chapters, and were less spiced with mischief; and mischief is Gibbon's great resource against dullness. But though 'Protestant zeal was more indifferent,' as he puts it, to the Trinitarian disputes of the fourth and fifth centuries, than to the primitive Christians, there is abundance of mischief to be found when he reaches those disputes. Such scenes are his real pastime, and whet his sarcasm to its keenest point. Like that of Dryden, it does not admit of being refuted in set terms, and it is omnipresent. Flaubert could not hunt more nicely for the right word.

'Within these limits the almost invisible and tremulous ball of orthodoxy was allowed securely to vibrate.' . . . 'When the Arian pestilence approached their frontiers, they were supplied with the seasonable preservative of the Homoousion, by the paternal care of the Roman pontiff.' . . . 'The prerogatives of the King of Heaven were settled, or changed, or modified, in the cabinet of an earthly monarch.' . . . 'The *circumincessio* is perhaps the deepest and darkest corner of the whole theological abyss.' . . . 'Future tyrants were encouraged to believe that the blood which they might shed in a long reign would instantly be washed away in the waters of regeneration.'

These arrows fly thickest in the footnotes to the *Decline and Fall*, and also animate many of the classic passages in the memoir, such as the picture of Oxford and the list of the clerical opponents who owed to Gibbon their preferment. Once, while recalling his own doubts as to the choice of a profession, he remarks: 'The law requires some abilities; the church imposes some restraints.' This *some* is one of his favourite weapons. And we do not know our Gibbon if we think the two phrases are disconnected. The church, he means, not only imposes *some* restraints, but it requires *no* abilities. But Gibbon's humour does not play only upon ecclesiastics; it is often lighter and more gently diffused; from Pascal, he says, he has 'learned the weapon of grave and temperate irony'; and I cannot forbear from a last example:

If, in the neighbourhood of the commercial and literary town of Glasgow, a race of cannibals has really existed, we may contemplate, in the period of the Scottish history, the opposite extremes of savage and civilised life. Such reflections tend to enlarge the circle of our ideas: and to encourage the pleasing hope that New Zealand may produce, in some future age, the Hume of the Southern Hemisphere.

These great artists in irony, Bayle and Voltaire, Fielding and Hume and Gibbon, what a chorus! how good they are for us,

how they prick illusions, how they refresh and aid the intellect, and how they 'deceive the burden of life,' with their great sound sense! If the eighteenth century had done no more for us, it would always have left us with these tonic springs.

XIV

Eastern poetry and fable had begun to leave their mark upon our literature. Nor could learning, oratory, and history be unaffected by such an event as the establishment of the British Raj. The speeches of Burke and Sheridan were to familiarise the imagination with the life and affairs of India. But the work of Clive had already demanded and produced a worthy historian. His friend Robert Orme,[1] a member of the Madras Council, had prompted the despatch of the defender of Arcot to punish the crime of Surajah Dowlah. Orme remained in India during the greater part of the period, extending from 1745 to 1761, of which on his return home he became the chronicler. In 1763 he published a volume of his *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan from 1745*. This instalment deals with the 'war in Coromandel,' waged during the first eleven years. Clive, indeed, is the rising star; but Dupleix, the yet unfallen Lucifer of the drama, is still in predominance; and to his sinister genius Orme, who is above all things equitable, pays full tribute, somewhat in the spirit of Milton admiring Satan. Further volumes, describing the yet more decisive events in Bengal, appeared in 1778, just twenty-one years after Plassey. Orme, who was long historiographer to the Company, and who bequeathed a mass of precious material now stored in the India Office, lived till 1801, thus surviving Gibbon. He was an admirer not only of Dr. Johnson, but of the fine arts, and left a most amiable memory.

His massive book is true to its title; and in the dedication to the king we are told that its aim is to 'commemorate the successes of the British arms.' Nine-tenths of it is a minute record of battles, campaigns, and sieges, conducted amidst a maze of Oriental intrigue. It is a document of original value; and although Orme rarely specifies his authorities, its general faithfulness has been accepted. He was hampered by his method; for, like Kinglake a century afterwards, he chose to swamp his narrative in an excess of particulars. Macaulay, who admired and used his book, finds that in one volume Orme 'allots, on an average, a closely printed quarto page to

the events of every forty-eight hours.' Taking the entire text, the actual average is about one page to the events of every five days. The book is therefore easier to refer to than to finish. Orme, moreover, though always lucid and orderly, seldom rises to a survey of high policy, or to an analysis of general causes. He was little versed in the vernaculars ; he had but a moderate sympathy with the Indians ; and, in speaking of the Hindu cults and poetry, he wonders 'how a people so reasonable in other respects should have adopted such a code of nonsense as a creed of religion.' Macaulay, who had the chance of knowing better, was to talk in much the same tone in his celebrated Minute ; but Orme wrote when the work of Sir William Jones (who highly commended the *History*) was only beginning to be known. For all these drawbacks, Orme can rise to a great occasion ; and he is a masterly painter, in what used to be called the Dutch style, of single episodes. After describing, for instance, a certain fort, that of Bobilee, with much technical detail, he proceeds to tell how its inmates, sooner than surrender, fought to the end and deliberately stabbed their own women and children one by one. His restrained and detached manner shows well beside the grosser colouring of Macaulay ; and some of the strokes, in his picture of the Black Hole, recall Thucydides' pages on the plague ; there is the same kind of condensed thinking. In the following passage the italics (which Orme would have disdained) are not his own :

> Those who still survived in the inward part of the dungeon, finding that the water had afforded them no relief, made efforts to obtain air, by endeavouring to scramble over the heads of those who stood between them and the windows ; where the utmost strength of every one was employed for two hours, either in maintaining his own ground, or in endeavouring to get that of which others were in possession. *All regards of compassion and affection were lost, and no one would recede or give way for the relief of another.* Faintness sometimes gave short pauses of quiet, *but the first motion of any one renewed the struggle through all*, under which ever and anon some one sunk to rise no more. At two o'clock not more than fifty remained alive.

There is the same quality in the narratives of Arcot and of Plassey. Orme is everywhere sparing of epithets. He lets the stories of Omichund, and of the forged signature of Watson, tell themselves, and adds no remark. He writes good, always dignified Georgian prose, and is hardly touched by the desire to Latinise or to round his periods.

There are many other [1] historical writers or compilers during

this period, such as Lyttelton with his *History of Henry the Second* (1767), and Adam Ferguson with his *History of the Roman Republic* (1783); but these, though of interest in the chronicle of learning, hardly concern letters. William Mitford's *History of Greece* began to appear in 1784; and the age of Lingard, of Sharon Turner, and of Hallam was to follow. As a writer, no historian was to compare with Gibbon until the appearance of Macaulay.

NOTES

C.E.L.	Cambridge History of English Literature.
D.N.B.	Dictionary of National Biography.
E.B.	Encyclopædia Britannica, eleventh edition.
M.L.R.	Modern Language Review.
R.E.S.	Review of English Studies.
P.M.L.A. . . .	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.
T.L.S.	*Times* Literary Supplement.

p. 2, note 1. **Ramsay.** *Works*, with *Life*, G. Chalmers, three vols., 1851 (essay by Lord Woodhouselee). See A. Gibson, *New Light on A. R.*, 1927; many new details, corrections, and suggestions, biographical and bibliographical. Also J. W. Mackail, *A. R. and the Romantic Revival*, in *Essays and Studies of the Eng. Association*, 1924, x. 137-144; I think better of some of Ramsay's work, but agree that he 'gave the first clearly assignable impulse to the romantic movement' of the century.

p. 2, note 2. **historian.** T. F. Henderson, in *C.E.L.*, ix. 368, 'Scottish Popular Poetry before Burns'; see the whole chapter. See too Hugh Walker, *Three Centuries of Scottish Lit.*, two vols., 1893, vol. ii.; and H. J. Graham, *Scottish Men of Letters in the XVIIIth Cent.*, 1901 (largely biographical).

p. 3. **Hamilton of Bangour.** *Poems and Songs*, ed. James Paterson, 1858, containing matter from MS. not in early editions (1748, etc.) and useful notes on the origin of each piece. The edn. of 1748 was ed., anonymously, by Adam Smith.

p. 4, note 1. **anthologies.** See W. MacNeile Dixon, *Edinburgh Book of Scottish Verse*, 1910; and G. Eyre-Todd, *Scottish Poetry of the XVIIIth Century*, two vols., 1896.

p. 4, note 2. **Bruce.** James Mackenzie, *Life and Complete Works of M. B.*, 1914 (embodying much of the author's *Life of M. B.*, 1905); contains emphatic plea for Bruce in the matter of the *Cuckoo*. So A. B. Grosart in *Works of M. B.*, 1865; and it is given to Bruce in the *Oxford Book of XVIIIth Cent. Verse*. See summary of arguments in *Chambers's Cyclop. of Eng. Lit.*, 1902, ii. 529-30 (on the whole for Logan); and by Eyre-Todd, *op. cit.* (on the whole for Bruce), ii. 64 ff. Logan is also said to have appropriated religious verse from other poets.

p. 4, note 3. **Ross.** *Helenore*, ed. J. Longmuir, 1866 (with songs); but I own I have not learnt the foreign tongue in order to read it.

p. 5. **Fergusson.** *Bibliography*, by J. A. Fairley, 1915. *Poet. Works*, ed. Robert Ford, 1905 (memoir, notes, glossary). Many details on Burns's debt in Henley and Henderson's 'centenary' edn. of Burns, four vols., 1896-7; and remarkable note on Fergusson in Henley's *Essay*, iv. 261-2.

p. 6. **Grongar Hill.** First printed by David Lewis in *Misc. Poems by Several Hands*, 1726; the weaker version, first by Richard Savage in *Misc. Poems and Translations*, 1726. The two poems are given textually by Garland Greeves, *Journal of Eng. and Germanic Philology*, April 1917, pp. 8 ff. Dyer's *Poems*, ed. E. Thomas, 1903.

p. 9. **spleen.** I owe several of these references to the entertaining thesis of Florine Kalkühler, *Die Natur des Spleen* (in the first half of the eighteenth century), Leipzig, 1920.

p. 10. **Shenstone.** *Bibliography* (brief) in *Camb. Eng. Lit.*, x. 456; and full one of first edd. in Iolo A. Williams, *Seven XVIIIth Century Bibliographies*, 1924 (with valuable essay). A proper edition of all the works and letters, and also a new Life, are wanted. *Correspondence*, in Dodsley's ed. of 1764 and later issues; and more in Hans Hecht, *T. Percy und W. S., ein Briefwechsel*, 1909 (in *Quellen und Forschungen*, Strassburg, no. 103); these letters are edited from MS. in the B.M., with full notes. Many of the dates assigned by Dodsley are corrected by J. E. Wells, 'Dating of S.'s Letters,' in *Anglia*, vol. xxxv., 1912. See too *Letters of Lady Luxborough to W. Shenstone, Esq.*, three vols., 1775. The last full ed. of the *Poetical Works* seems to be G. Gilfillan's, 1854; a new one would include the newly found pieces printed by Alice A. Hazeltine, *A Study of W. S. and his Critics*, Wisconsin, 1918, from a MS. in the poet's hand. Miss Hazeltine gives a full account of Shenstone's 'critics,' of various dates, and collects many of his prose dicta, on which see note below to p. 17. The most interesting of the new poems are perhaps 'Lysander to Chloe,' 'In Winter, 1746,' and 'Queen Elizabeth, a Ballad': and there is also the Latin epitaph on a dog, 'In Memoriam Flirtillae, pusillae nimium canis, et innocuae; agilis, blandae, tenerae, pulcherrimae,' etc.

p. 11. **Lady Luxborough.** For her circle of ladies and poets, see the interesting pages by W. H. Hutton on the 'Warwickshire coterie,' in *C.E.L.*, x. 307-15 (Duchess of Somerset, Graves, Jago, Somervile, and others).

p. 13, note 1. **Schoolmistress.** The 1737 *Poems* contained twelve stanzas. The 1742 version, with its twenty-eight, is reprinted in facsimile by the Oxford Press, 1924. This was copied, without leave and to the poet's annoyance, in the first ed. of Dodsley's *Collection*, 1748. Shenstone then sent his enlarged and corrected edition, of thirty-five verses, which came out in Dodsley's *second* ed. of the same year. See the letters of 1747, in *Works*, ed. 1773, iii. 175 ff. That Shenstone had read Spenser before 1737 (though his words in a letter of 24th Dec. 1741 seem to imply the contrary) is, I think, proved by de Maar, *Hist. of Mod. Eng. Romanticism*, vol. i. (1924), pp. 95-6.

p. 13, note 2. **carried away by his author.** See W. L. Phelps, *Beginnings of English Romantic Movement*, 1893, pp. 66-7.

p. 14. **a living poet.** Iolo A. Williams, in his essay on Shenstone, *op. cit.*

p. 17. **Ossian.** Passage quoted by Hecht, *Thomas Percy und W. S.*, p. 124, from a letter of Shenstone's to a Scottish friend, MacGouan. See a selection from Shenstone's prose, *Men and Manners*, ed. Havelock Ellis, 1927.

p. 19. **Shaw.** See *Poems of Cuthbert Shaw and Thomas Russell*, ed. Eric Partridge, 1925, containing a full account of this poet and of his reputation both in and after his lifetime.

p. 20. **minor lyric.** Dodsley, Pearch, Fawkes and Woty, etc., only

introduce us to this mass of writing. See Iolo A. Williams, *Byways round Helicon*, 1922; his anthology, *Shorter Poems of the XVIIIth Century*, 1923; and Oswald Doughty, *Forgotten Lyrics of the XVIIIth Century*, 1924 (extracts under headings, 'love,' 'nature,' 'death,' etc.). These scholars bring to light many poets not in the *D.N.B.* I have consulted a good many originals, but cannot pretend to have examined the multitude of names; and have quoted Free and Jenner from Mr. Doughty. The *Oxford Book of XVIIIth Cent. Verse* has also given much guidance; and, amongst older treasuries, of course F. Locker-Lampson, *Lyra Elegantiarum* (edn. 1891).

p. 22. **Mrs. Mary Jones.** Her *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*, 1750, published for the benefit of her old mother (who died before they could appear), include in their list of subscribers Chesterfield, Lyttelton, Lowth, and Horace Walpole. See, in Boswell, Johnson's letter of June 21, 1757. The 'Mrs.' was a title of courtesy; she was unmarried. The letters in the *Miscellanies* are of the sententious-playful kind; and the lady finds in *Night Thoughts* 'some noble, soul-awakening things,' that make her 'blood run cold when I read 'em' (p. 233).

p. 23. **Lewis.** He says that none of the pieces, in his belief, have been printed before, except two of which he inserts Latin versions (of these one is *William and Margaret*). Among other contents must be named *To Kitty, a Poetical Young Lady* and *To a Young Lady with a Lark.* The *Song to Winifreda* was made better known by Percy, in the *Reliques.* It had also come out in J. G. Cooper's *Letters concerning Taste* (p. 91 in third edn., 1757), where it is described as 'wrote above 100 years ago'; in some old collections it is assigned to Cooper, who was three years old when Lewis printed it.

p. 25, note 1. **Mary Leapor.** *Poems upon Several Occasions*, 1748. *The Charms of Anthony* (pp. 249 ff.) is another well-turned pastoral; and *The Inspired Quill* (pp. 111 ff.) is a handling of the *transmigration*-theme (of *Chrysal*, etc.); the quill has been a lawyer, a crow, etc.

p. 25, note 2. **Scott.** *Poet. Works*, 1782. *Critical Essays*, with *Life*, ed. J. Hoole, 1785.

p. 26. **sonnets.** List in Havens, *Influence of Milton*, etc., pp. 685-6, of sonnets published during the century. I have not explored them all; among those I have seen (besides what are named in text) are the thirty-two very poor ones in *Poems to Thespia*, 1791 (by Hugh Downman), and those in *Gent. Mag.* For full references to these last, and for other information, I have to thank Miss Lilian Shaw, M.A.

p. 28. **Sir C. H. Williams.** *Works*, three vols., 1822 (a better edition is wanted).

p. 29. **Anstey.** *Poet. Works*, with memoir by his son, 1808. See too W. Maier, *C. A. und der 'New Bath Guide,'* Heidelberg, 1914 (*Anglistische Forschungen*, no. 39), for many details.

p. 31. **Captain T—.** In Dodsley (1770), v. 240 ff.

p. 33. **Ode to Horror.** In the *Student*, 1751, vol. ii. no. 8. Quoted in full, *T.L.S.*, Jan. 12, 1922, by H. O. White, to whom I owe this reference; the allusions to Collins are pointed out, with the evidence for Thornton as 'Chimaericus Oxoniensis,' etc.

p. 34, note 1. **Sir J. H. Moore.** I have only seen the third edn., 1783, of

*Poetical Trifles, by *** **** *****, Bath. The *Duke of Benevento* is now accessible in D. Nichol Smith's *Oxford Book of XVIIIth Cent. Verse*, pp. 548-55; the remark about Byron is the editor's, p. xi.

p. 34, note 2. **Byrom.** *Private Journal and Lit. Remains*, ed. R. Parkinson (for Chetham Society), two vols., 1854-7 (brief supplement by J. E. Bailey, 1882). *Poems* in Chalmers, vol. xv.; but fully edited and annotated by Sir A. W. Ward (Chetham Society), four vols., 1894-1912. See note below to p. 211.

p. 35. **Dodsley.** R. Straus, *R. D.*, 1910, a full account with bibliography, pp. 314-383, both of Dodsley's works and of his publications. See too W. P. Courtney, *D.'s Collection of Poems*, 1910, for great research into authors, identifications, etc. (a work, unfortunately, printed privately in limited edition).

p. 38. **Wartons.** See *The Three Wartons, a Choice of their Verse*, ed. Eric Partridge, 1927.

p. 39. **Joseph Warton.** Joseph Wooll, *Biog. Memoirs of J. W.*, 1806, includes letters, and extracts from works.

p. 41, note 1. **Thomas Warton** (the younger). Clarissa Rinaker, *T. W.*, Univ. of Illinois, 1916, a full study, with bibliography; also list (pp. 177-232) of printed sources for the *History*: and correspondence with Percy and others (Harvard and other MSS. drawn upon). *Poems*, first collected 1777; more fully in 1802, two vols., with R. Mant's memoir. R. D. Havens, 'T. W. and the XVIIIth Cent. Dilemma,' in *Studies in Philology*, Jan. 1928, xxv. 36-50, brings out (especially as to the *Observations on Spenser*) how incomplete was Warton's 'rebellion' against the 'classical' school.

p. 41, note 2. **History of English Poetry.** The ed. by W. C. Hazlitt, four vols., 1871, was an attempt to bring Warton, corrected and amplified, up to date, by a band of scholars, whose additions are marked typographically; not a very satisfactory venture now. Joseph Ritson, *Observations*, 1782, attacks the first three books, correcting *minutiae*, and comically raging against the 'injudicious *farrago* and *gallimaufry*' of the work, and the 'fulsome and disgusting egotism' of the author.

p. 44. **Collins.** Modern editions by Moy Thomas, 1858, 1894; W. C. Bronson, 1898; C. Stone, 1907; A. Lane Poole, 1917 (with Gray), 1926. Letters in *T.L.S.*, March 15 and April 5, 1928, show that a text, memoir, etc., up to date, are needed. See Bronson's valuable edn. for (*inter alia*) the poet's reputation in the eighteenth century; and, on the same matter, H. O. White in *T.L.S.*, Jan. 5 and 12, 1922, and article on 'Collins's Letters' in *R.E.S.*, Jan. 1927, iii. 12-21 (transcription of that to J. G. Cooper, discussion of problems, and the Earl of Lichfield's conclusion to the *Passions*); also A. D. M'Killop, 'The Romanticism of W. C.' in *Studies in Philology*, Jan. 1923, vol. xx. (to whom I owe the reference to Cooper's *Letters concerning Taste*). See too J. W. Mackail, 'Collins and the English Lyric,' in *Studies of the English Poets*, 1926, pp. 135-156 (also the essays on Pope, Thomson, and Young).

p. 51. **'its last cool gleam.'** See letters by H. W. Garrod and others, *T.L.S.*, April 1928. The difficulty is (1) in Collins's elliptical grammar; construct, 'or [where] some time-hallowed pile.' (2) In the picture: how can a pile (even overhanging the lake), or uplands, 'reflect' the lake's gleam? A. Macdonald, *T.L.S.*, March 22, 1928, quotes Emile Legouis's note to his translation of the ode (in Ritchie and Moore's *Manual of French Composition*),

suggesting that we *might* read, instead of 'its,' 'thy,' *i.e.* of the 'votaress,' Evening, whose last gleam touches tower and upland. If we are (without authority) to alter the text, this seems the best way ('mais le peut-on?' as Legouis asks).

p. 52, note 1. **text of Highland Ode.** Bronson, Stone, Lane Poole give this, purged: (1) of the words and half-lines added by A. Carlyle, and the stanza-and-a-half added by H. Mackenzie (these are clearly and honestly marked in the *Transactions*, etc., 1788, vol. i., 'Papers of the literary class,' pp. 63-75); and (2) of the additions by the anon. editor of 1788 (a most dubious personage; but *some one* wrote the good line 'In his bewitched, low, marshy willow brake'). Distrust older edd., *e.g.* Moy Thomas's of 1894, where text and comment are in confusion. For the best discussion of this business see Bronson, pp. 67 ff., 121 ff.

p. 52, note 2. **Martin.** *Description* reprinted in Pinkerton's *Voyages*, 1809, ii. 572-609; the *Voyage to St. Kilda* follows. Of this the t.p. (fourth ed., 1753) notes, as to the natives, 'their beauty and singular chastity'—the 'blameless manners' of the *Ode*.

p. 54. **Gray.** *Bibliography*, by C. S. Northup, 1912. No Life at length, embodying all that is *now* known; but see (Sir) E. Gosse, *Gray*, 1882, 1889, etc. (*E.M.L.*); D. C. Tovey, *Gray and his Friends*, 1890, and *Letters*, three vols., 1900-12; and Paget Toynbee, *Corr. of Gray, Walpole, West, and Ashton*, two vols., 1915 (the same scholar, *T.L.S.*, Oct. 8, 1925, announced a complete edn. of the letters, in preparation). *Works*, ed. Gosse, four vols., 1884, is the fullest collection since J. Mitford's (five vols. 1836), including the letters known up to date, and many of the most interesting of the prose memoranda (for more on these see T. J. Mathias, *Observations*, etc., 1815). *Poems*, ed. J. Bradshaw, 1891 (Latin and English); D. C. Tovey, 1911 (English; valuable notes); A. Lane Poole (with Collins), 1917, 1926; and see W. L. Phelps, *Selections from the Poetry and Prose of T. G.*, 1894. For comment, besides the above, see, *e.g.*, Matthew Arnold in Ward's *Eng. Poets*, and Sir L. Stephen in *D.N.B.*

p. 55, note 1. **eulogised in verse.** Mason, ed. 1821, pp. 66, 69, prints some of these effusions. Garrick adjures the shade of Gray to 'wake slumbering Virtue in the Briton's heart,' and an anonymous person remarks that Gray 'told us that Virtue never dies.' On Garrick's reading and reception of the odes, and his accepted substitution of '*plung'd* to endless night,' in the *Bard*, for 'sunk,' see *T.L.S.*, Dec. 18, 1919 (Paget Toynbee).

p. 55, note 2. '**quadruple alliance.**' On this see Paget Toynbee, *op. cit.*, giving a full picture of the group. Ashton defines himself in his letters: and there is a list of West's compositions, with fresh examples. On the assumed names, 'Celadon,' etc., see letter of Sir Edward Elgar in *T.L.S.*, Sept. 4, 1919.

p. 56. **started on the Elegy.** But see Tovey's ed. of the *Poems*, pp. 128-30, where Mason's account (that the poem was begun in 1742) is questioned. On some translations of the *Elegy* into Greek, Welsh, and Spanish, see *T.L.S.*, Feb. 28, March 21, and April 18, 1918.

p. 57. **odes.** For the history and mechanism of the form see R. Shafer, *The English Ode to 1660*, 1918; who makes it clearer than ever that Cowley, so far from 'inventing' the lawless ode, had abundant precedents.

p. 63, note **1. some Icelandic.** On this point see the thorough discussion by G. L. Kittredge in Phelps, *Selections from the Poetry and Prose of T. G.*, pp. xli-l: 'no doubt he had read over the originals [of the two odes] till he was able after a fashion to translate them without looking at his "crib"'; and so 'he may have arrived at a halting knowledge of the language.' This, however, was enough for his poetic purpose. For more see notes by Tovey in his ed. of *Gray's Eng. Poems*, pp. 237 ff., where the Latin versions are given. These come originally from T. Bartholinus, *Antiq. Dan.*, 1689; that of the *Fatal Sisters* is copied in T. Torfaeus, *Orcades*, 1697, his debt to whom Gray acknowledges. The *Fatal Sisters* is *Darradarlioð*, the *Song of Darts*; and the *Descent of Odin*, formerly entitled *Vegtamskviða* (Song of Vegtam, *i.e.* Odin), is called in the *Corp. Poet. Boreale* the *Doom of Balder*.

p. 63, note 2. **Temple.** On the whole Norse influence during this period see W. P. Ker in *C.E.L.*, vol. x. ch. x. (1913); also C. H. Herford, *Norse Myth in Eng. Literature*, 1919 (*Rylands Library Bulletin*, vol. v.). Valuable dissertations by F. E. Farley, *Scandinavian Influences on the Eng. Romantic Movement*, Harvard, 1903, and C. H. Nordby, *Influence of the Old Norse Lit. upon Eng. Lit.*, Columbia Univ. Press, 1901.

p. 65. **Evan Evans.** E. D. Snyder, 'T. G.'s Interest in Celtic' (*Mod. Philology*, April 1914, vol. xi.), gives a noteworthy list of books on Welsh topics read by Gray. Saunders Lewis, *A School of Welsh Augustans*, 1924, prints many new letters from Percy to Evans, with allusions to the *Reliques*, to translation of Mallet, to *Five Pieces*, etc. Evans's *Specimens* repaid his debt (as an imitator in Welsh) to the English poets; and he says shrewd things, *e.g.* on Macpherson, who 'has thrown a hood over men's eyes' (Lewis, p. 136).

p. 69. **Gray . . . love.** On this (supposed) affair see *T.L.S.*, Sept. 30, 1920, 'Bonstetten and Gray' (Paget Toynbee).

p. 73. **History of English Poetry.** Letter to T. Warton, April 15, 1770. The plan, together with Warton's reply, and with Pope's scheme, is printed by Courthope, *Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, vol. i. (1895), pp. vii-xi.

p. 79. **Linnaeus.** C. Eliot Norton, *The Poet Gray as a Naturalist*, Boston, Mass., 1903, a work too little known. Gray's copy of the *Systema Naturae* belonged to Ruskin and came into Norton's hands. He gives selections from the notes, and facsimiles of some of the drawings. Opposite 'Nicotiana' Gray observes: 'herba nunc per orbem adorata, licet venenata.'

p. 80. **Mason.** *Works*, four vols., 1811. John W. Draper, *W. M., a Study in XVIIIth Cent. Culture*, N.Y., 1924, an exhaustive monograph, with bibliography, etc. *Satiric Poems, printed anonymously by W. M.*, ed. Paget Toynbee, 1926, contains Walpole's notes in full, portraits, etc.

p. 83. **Smart.** *Bibliography* (partial), by G. J. Gray, in *Trans. of Bibliog. Soc.*, Feb. 1908. For life see *D.N.B.* (T. Seccombe), and K. A. M'Kenzie, *C. S., Sa Vie et ses Œuvres*, Paris, 1925. The memoir (by Christopher Hunter) in *Poems*, 1791, is a main source. Many edd. now of *Song to David*: *e.g.* that of E. Blunden (with other poems, especially from the *Hymns*), 192[illegible]. A certain number can be seen in Anderson and Chalmers.

p. 87. **Percy.** Alice C. C. Gaussen, *Percy, Prelate and Poet*, 1908, a popular account; a thorough study is needed in view of (*e.g.*) Hans Hecht, *T. P. und William Shenstone, ein Briefwechsel*, 1909, Strassburg (*Quellen und*

Forschungen, no. 103), and of articles in *R.E.S.* mentioned below. *Reliques*, critical edition (collation of older edns., etc.), by M. M. A. Schröer, two parts, Heilbronn, 1889-93; the fullest in English is by H. B. Wheatley, three vols., 1876-7; many other edns. *Bishop Percy's Folio MS.*, ed. J. W. Hales and F. J. Furnivall, four vols., 1867-8. See W. P. Ker in *C.E.L.*, x. 232-4.

p. 88. **Hau Kiou Choaan and The Matrons.** See, upon both, A. Milner-Barry, 'Note on Early Literary Relations of Goldsmith and Percy,' *R.E.S.*, ii. 51-61, Jan. 1926; and, on the former, L. F. Powell, *R.E.S.*, ii. 446-55, Oct. 1926, who puts together all the data in Percy's correspondence, etc., with many other details: *e.g.* Douce's MS. note, in Bodleian copy, of Percy's intended 'advertisement' to a new edition (did this ever appear?).

p. 90. **Heir of Linne.** See Hales and Furnivall, i. xvii; and the abridged Child's *Eng. and Scottish Ballads* (ed. H. C. Sargent and G. L. Kittredge, 1907), p. 576, no. 267. A glance through this volume will give the best idea of the exact debt of the ballad-store both to the Folio MS. and to the *Reliques*.

p. 92, note 1. **ballad studies.** See Grace R. Trenery, 'Ballad Collections of the XVIIIth Century,' in *M.L.R.*, July 1915, x. 283-303, for an account of Percy's methods, and a more detailed one of Herd, the Evanses, Pinkerton, and Ritson. The sentence on Herd, quoted in text, is from this paper, p. 290. (There are notes on these writers in *Survey, 1780-1830*, i. 301.)

p. 92, note 2. **Herd.** See Hans Hecht, *Songs from D. H.'s MSS.*, fully edited, 1904.

p. 93. **Macpherson's 'Ossian.'** Literature far too large to indicate. No adequate bibliography up to date (1928); but see *C.E.L.*, x. 487-9 (1910), and further reff. there. For the best general accounts see P. van Tieghem, *Ossian en France*, 1917, pp. 7-99 (introduction to his important monograph); and especially J. S. Smart, *J. M.*, 1905. Bailey Saunders, *Life and Letters of J. M.*, 1894. Many edd. of the *Poems* (a convenient one, ed. W. Sharp, 1896). Indispensable critical edition, with all variants, etc., of the *Fragments* by O. L. Jiriczek, Heidelberg, 1915 (*Anglist. Forschungen*, no. xlvii.). They underwent two overhaulings, first in the *Fingal* and *Temora* vols., and then in the collected *Poems* of 1773, which was Macpherson's 'definitive edition,' often reprinted.

p. 94, note 1. **pronounced.** On the 'originals' published in 1807 by the Highland Society of London (*not* that of Edinburgh), see L. C. Stern, *Die ossianische Heldenlieder*, in *Zeitschr. für vergleichende Litteraturgeschichte*, 1895, viii. (new series), pp. 57 ff.; and the whole paper (original Irish cycles, pp. 72 ff.; 'Ossianids,' pp. 82 ff., and note on the Rev. A. Pope, and on Jeremy Stone, who gathered Highland ballads *before* Macpherson).

p. 94, note 2. **translation.** By Kuno Meyer, in *Revue celtique*, vi. 186, Oct. 1884.

p. 95. **fused cycles.** For the procedure in *Temora*, see M. E. Windisch, *Revue celtique*, v. 70 ff., Aug. 1881 (in French translation); who pertinently says (p. 89) that Macpherson's work is like a 'kaleidoscope, where a turn of the hand has confused everything and made a bizarre mixture of new shapes out of the same elements.'—I owe the reference to this article, and Stern's, and Meyer's, to van Tieghem's excellent summary, *op. cit.*, putting me on the track; I have no knowledge of the Celtic languages.

p. 97. **Gibbon.** *D. and F.*, ed. J. B. Bury, i. 5, note. For other references see his *Memoirs*, ed. G. B. Hill, pp. 315-16.

p. 98. **one of these.** This is no. 'XIII B' in Jiriczek, *op. cit.*, who was put on its traces by Stern's article, cited above.

p. 103. **fame.** See J. S. Smart, *op. cit.*, pp. 129 ff.

p. 104. **Chatterton.** *Bibliography*: fullest in F. A. Hyett and W. Bazeley, *Chattertoniana*, 1914; see too below in *Works*, ed. H. D. Roberts. *Life*: Daniel Wilson, *Chatterton*, 1869; not superseded by David Masson, *C., a Biography*, 1899 (first form, 1851). Other memoirs and notices in edd. of *Poetical Works*. Of these, W. W. Skeat's of 1871, two vols. (memoir by Edw. Bell), contains both the avowed verses and the *Rowley Poems* (with Skeat's decisive *Essay* thereon); and samples both of the Rowley prose and of the signed prose, with lists of works not included. Skeat modernises spelling, and *translates* many words in text, putting the originals in footnotes: an uncomfortable compromise. For *Rowley Poems* as in Tyrwhitt's ed. (his third, with appendix *versus* 'Rowley'), *i.e.* spelt as by Chatterton, see reprint of this by M. E. Hare, with introd., 1911 (but Tyrwhitt did not know all the poems). Other edd.: *Poet. Works*, 1906, two vols., ed. H. D. Roberts ('Muses Library'—*Rowley Poems* partly modernised); and ed. Sir Sidney Lee, two vols., 1906-9. I have not found any edition of *all* Chatterton's works exactly as he produced them. See too Courthope, *Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, v. 412-18.

p. 106. **Walpole.** The well-known incident of his correspondence with the poet is hard to judge finally. For detail and the fairest finding, see Dobson, *H. W.*, ch. vii.; also D. Wilson, *C.*, 1869, pp. 169-190. Walpole's defence is in his *Works* (1798), iv. 205 ff. The charge was absurd that he had hastened Chatterton's end by his neglect. But he feels that though void of offence he has exposed himself to a misconstruction which he has not all the material to dissipate. Some of the essential documents are lost—the poet's second letter, and Walpole's 'kind' and 'tender' reply. Probably his error was not to see the genius of the verses, but only the imposture; yet, again, we do not know which of them he saw.

p. 124. **Lowth.** The extracts in the text are from Gregory's version, which includes additional notes by Michaelis and others. Among many other points of interest, see the analysis of allegory, or metaphor ramifying and expanded, in lecture x.; of the imputing, as in the Song of Deborah, of 'fictitious speeches to real persons' (xiii); and of the 'simple, regular, and perfect' scheme (of the 'classical' kind) that the 'prophetic Muse sometimes preserves' (xx).

p. 126. **Hurd.** F. Kilvert, *Memoirs of Life and Writings of R. H.*, 1860, includes many extracts from Hurd's 'commonplace-books.' *Works*, eight vols., 1811. The *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (with the third (quoted in my text) of the *Dialogues Moral and Political*), ed. Edith J. Morley (with valuable introductory matter), 1911 (the *Letters* collated with the definitive edn. of 1788). The rest of the *Dialogues* (1759) are of the dullest.

p. 130, note 1. **Lamotte.** I owe this pleasant discovery to Saintsbury, *Hist. of Criticism*, ii. 497, note; and, for all the critics 'from Addison to Johnson,' see the chapter, pp. 427-500. I have not been able to see Scott of Amwell's essays (p. 500).

p. 130, note 2. **Reynolds.** For a further note see *Survey, 1780-1830*, i. 233-4.

p. 132. **Morgann.** *Essay*, ed. W. A. Gill, 1912; also in *XVIIIth Cent. Essays on Shakespeare*, ed. D. Nichol Smith, 1903 (contains also the prefaces of the successive editors down to Johnson, and Dennis's and Farmer's essays on the poet).

p. 134, note 1. **modern scholars.** Two, to whom the fullest acknowledgments are due, are indispensable: G. Saintsbury, *Hist. of Eng. Prosody*, ii. 536-66 (1908); and T. S. Omond, *Eng. Metrists in the XVIIIth and XIXth Centuries*, 1907 (also his *Eng. Metrists*, 1903, 1921). I have been able to consult the originals, except where otherwise stated. Among writers omitted in the text, as of less account, are: (1) Henry Pemberton, *Observations on Poetry*, 1738, who tells Milton (p. 132) how *not* to write blank verse, and draws shining examples from Glover's *Leonidas*; (2) Edward Manwaring, *Stichology*, 1737, an early musical metrist, very abstruse and confused; (3) John Herries, *Elements of Speech*, 1773, who is chiefly elocutionary, and has a simple faith in imitative metre; (4) I have failed to see John Mason's *Power of Numbers*, or his *Power and Harmony of Prosaic Numbers* (both 1749), which are of evident interest; and must refer to Saintsbury, *Hist. of Eng. Prosody*, iii. 561-2.

p. 134, note 2. **Foster.** I have used the second (revised) edition of 1763. For more, see Omond, *Eng. Metrists*, 1907, pp. 20-25. I have not touched on Foster's views of pitch, and how it tends to lengthen quantity ('our acute accent and long quantity generally coincide,' p. 48).

p. 137. **Steele.** See Saintsbury, *Hist. of Eng. Prosody*, ii. 547-9 (with whom, in the main, I agree), in contrast with Omond, *op. cit.*, who salutes Steele though with many reserves. See, on the side of the musicians, D. S. MacColl, 'Rhythm in English Verse, Prose, and Speech,' in *Essays and Studies of the Eng. Association*, 1914. Also, incidentally, O. Elton, 'English Prose Numbers' (originally 1913) in *A Sheaf of Papers*, 1922. But the literature is large; the most elaborate of the musical prosodies is by William Thomson, *Basis of Eng. Rhythm*, 1904.

p. 138, note 1. **Harris** (1709-1780). With the best of will I cannot bring myself to say more of him in the text. *Hermes*, 1751, is a valiant but misguided effort to trace in logic the *rationale* of grammar. Of the three *Treatises*, 1744, that on 'happiness' is a strange 'gallimaufry' of Aristotle, Shaftesbury, and others; those on poetry, painting, and music are an early attempt to define the frontiers between the arts, some time before Lessing. The *Philosophical Arrangements*, 1775, are another medley of old and new. The *Philological Inquiries*, 1780, very prolix, very wrong-headed, and in their history ramshackle, are yet of interest for the notes on rhythm mentioned in my text and for their range of critical reading. Harris is still, in 1780, a worshipper of the 'rules,' and also of 'genius'—but how far behind Reynolds in his adjustment of their claims! *Works*, two vols., 1801, ed. by his son Lord Malmesbury, with memoir. On 'numbers' see ii. 315 ff. For more on Harris see Saintsbury, *Hist. of Criticism*, ii. 473-5 (a flaying, which in Swift's phrase leaves the victim's 'appearance' much 'altered for the worse').

p. 138, note 2. **Monboddo.** On his metrical views see Omond, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-8. The sketch, *Origin*, ii. 300 ff., of the chief English measures is very summary; but there is an interesting extract in rhymeless trochaics from

Gilbert West's *Pindar*. Monboddo prefers Milton to Pope, and blank verse to rhyme—another sign of the times (1774).

p. 142. **tangled.** See Omond, *Eng. Metrists*, 1907, pp. 47-54, for Sheridan's peculiar notions : *e.g.* that accent falls on the vowel when this is long (*hōly*), but on the consonant when the preceding vowel is short (*hab'it*).

p. 144. **Tyrwhitt.** For tributes see, *e.g.*, Saintsbury, in *C.E.L.*, ii. 163-6, a detailed description ; and W. P. Ker, in *C.E.L.*, x. 241. The references to Speght and Scott I owe to Ker, *Essays of Dryden*, 1900, ii. 309-10. Tyrwhitt's *Poetics*, in his note on ch. xiii. ('katharsis'), is an early forestalling of the modern view ; in tragedy, pity and fear, he says, 'vehementissime excitantur' ; but it is the fact that they 'non ex eo nutriri et validiores effici, quod Plato criminabatur, sed contra levari et exhauriri' ; and thus 'purgatio' is the 'opus proprium et quasi finis' of tragedy. There are reprints of the *Chaucer*, e.g. in the 'Old Poets' series, 1883.

p. 147. **history of thought.** Sir Leslie Stephen, *Hist. of Eng. Thought in the XVIIIth Century*, two vols., 1882 ; J. Seth, *Eng. Philosophers and Schools of Philosophy*, 1912 ; and the chapters by W. Sorley in *C.E.L.*, vol. ix. (1912), ch. xi., and vol. x. (1913), ch. xiv.

p. 149. **enthusiasm.** See O. Elton, 'Reason and Enthusiasm in the XVIIIth Century,' in *Essays and Studies of the Eng. Association*, vol. x., 1924, pp. 122-36.

p. 150, note 1. **Berkeley.** Standard ed. of *Works* by A. C. Fraser, four vols., 1901 (first in 1871) ; much elucidation ; vol. iv. contains, besides the *Commonplace Book*, the 'life and letters' (much new matter ; materials were first given by J. Stock in his ed. of the *Works*, two vols., 1784). *Works*, ed. G. Sampson, 1897-8 (preface by [the Earl of] Balfour) ; *Selections from B.*, ed. Fraser, 1874, etc. See, besides all histories of modern philosophy : Fraser, *B.*, 1881 ; R. Adamson, *Development of Mod. Philosophy*, two vols., 1903 ; T. H. Huxley, *Helps to the Study of B.*, in *Coll. Essays*, vol. vi. ; and G. Lyon, *L'Idéalisme en Angleterre, au xviii^e Siècle*, 1888.

p. 150, note 2. **Commonplace Book.** See, in *Works* (ed. Fraser), vol. iv., for some significant passages prefiguring the system : p. 422, 'Existence is *percipi*, or *percipere* (or *velle*, i.e. *agere*') ; p. 432 (to those who feared for the reality of phenomena), 'in short, be not angry ; you lose nothing, whether real or chimerical' ; and so on p. 500, 'the philosophers lose their Matter. The mathematicians lose their insensible sensations. The profane their extended Deity. Pray, what do the rest of mankind lose ? As for bodies, etc., we have them still.'

p. 151. **in the mind of God.** For an important modification of this idea, showing the transition from the *Principles* to *Siris*, see Berkeley's letter to his American disciple and adapter, Samuel Johnson, in *Works* (ed. Fraser), iv. 176 ff. : 'I have no objection against calling the ideas in the mind of God archetypes of ours. But I object against those archetypes by philosophers supposed to be real things, and to have a rational existence distinct from their eing perceived by any mind whatsoever.'

p. 153. **Alciphron a lay figure.** For a pungent statement of this see Sir J. Fitzjames Stephen, *Horae Sabbaticae*, third series, 1892, pp. 19-35 ; and all three papers there on Berkeley.

p. 154. **Norris.** I have found no allusion to him by Berkeley, though the resemblance of their ideas is often close; nor yet to Arthur Collier, whose *Clavis Universalis*, 1713 (introd. reprinted by Fraser in *Works*, iv. 385-9), is an independent argument against the existence of matter apart from a perceiving mind.

p. 157. **Hutcheson.** See T. Fowler, *Shaftesbury and H.*, 1882; the latest full study is by W. R. Scott, *F. H., his Life, Teaching*, etc., 1900 (new biographical detail, and estimate of historical position).

p. 159. **Hume.** Standard ed. of *Works*, by T. H. Green and T. H. Grose, Oxford, 1874, four vols. *Treatise*, also both *Enquiries*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 1896 and 1894. J. H. Burton, *Life and Corr. of D. H.*, two vols., 1846. See too, especially, the late C. E. Vaughan's *Studies in the History of Political Philosophy before and after Rousseau*, two vols., 1925; the chapter on Hume (i. 303-64) contains an account of the political theories, and the best analysis (mostly hostile) of Hume's general system with which I am acquainted (since Green's, in vol. i. of *Works*).

p. 164. **George Campbell.** In his *Dissertation on Miracles* (1762) he well points out the element of *petitio principii* in Hume's usage of the word 'experience,' in reference to the miraculous; but fails to see that Hume's argument is bound up with his whole theory of causation.

p. 169. **Adam Smith.** Dugald Stewart, *Memoir*, 1793; John Rae, *Life*, 1895; F. W. Hirst, *A. S.* (*E.M.L.*), 1904. I have not been able to see W. Eckstein's German translation, with notes, collation of editions, dissertation, etc., 1928, of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (reviewed *T.L.S.*, April 26); the sixth edn., 1790, is in a modern reprint, n.d. Many edns. of *Wealth of Nations*, *e.g.* by E. Cannan, 1904; and *Lectures on Justice*, etc., the same editor, 1896. See too W. R. Scott, *A. S.*, in *Proceedings of Brit. Academy*, Hertz lecture of June 6, 1923. The word 'Œconomy' (political) was still new, but had been used by James Steuart, *Inquiry into the Principles of Pol. Œconomy*, 1767; see Cannan, ed. *Wealth of Nations*, i. xviii.

p. 176. **Rev. John Gay.** *Dissertation*, prefixed to Edmund Law's translation, 1731, of William King's *De Origine Mali*; for forgotten associations see pp. xlviii ff.; and, for Gay's importance, James Seth, *Eng. Philosophers*, 1912, pp. 208, 217.

p. 177. **Brown.** He also wrote a learned but dreary *Dissertation* (1763) on the historical connexion, now to his regret almost dissolved, between poetry and music. It was altered for the unmusical, and reissued next year, as *History of the Rise and Progress of Poetry*. The allusions, *ad init.*, to the songs and dances of the Red Indians are of some interest, in the light of Gray's *Progress of Poesy* (1757); and also those to the union of the two arts in song, opera, anthem, and oratorio, at the time of writing. See H. M. Flasdieck, *J. B. und seine Dissertation*, etc., Halle, 1924 (*Studien zur eng. Philologie*, no. lxviii.; also discusses Brown generally).

p. 178. **Reid.** For more see *Survey, 1780-1830*, i. 228-9.

p. 184, note 1. **deists.** It will be long before the older authorities are antiquated: G. V. Lechler, *Gesch. der englischen Deismus*, 1841; M. Pattison, *Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688-1750*, 1860 (*Essays and Reviews*), also in his *Essays*, two vols., 1889; and, of course, Sir Leslie Stephen,

XVIIIth Century. Stephen's work is such, and the deists are often so barren, that I have severely cut down material in the text.

p. 184, note 2. **Collins.** See the long account of these debates by Stephen, *op. cit.*, ch. iv., secs. iii. and iv. I must own that his pages on Chandler's *Defence* dispensed me from reading that work.

p. 186, note 1. **Woolston.** *Works*, various dates and editions, bound up in five vols. (Bodleian). Vol. i. contains an anonymous short *Life.*

p. 186, note 2. **Chubb.** The *Posthumous Works*, two vols., 1748, contain, besides the *Author's Farewell*, some *Remarks on the Scriptures*, in which Chubb defends himself from the charge of 'falling foul of the Bible'; and the remarks, i. 33 ff., on Methodism are pointed: if it had 'been decently cooked up into a regular constitution, and were archbishoprics, bishoprics, deaneries, and other emoluments of grandeur, wealth, and power, annexed to it, I dare say it would be looked on with a more favourable eye.' . . . 'The terms *enthusiasm* and *enthusiast* should be cautiously applied by Christians, lest they should be found to terminate, not in Methodism, but in Christianity.' *A Discourse concerning Reason*, 1731, and the *True Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 1739, are the chief of Chubb's other tracts; and a further *Collection* of thirty-five appeared in 1754 in two vols. On Chubb see Leland, *View*, etc., ed. 1754, i. 157-94.

p. 187. **Dodwell the younger.** For fuller accounts see *D.N.B.*, *s.v.* (by J. H. Overton); Stephen, ch. iii. sec. vi. This H. D. was the son of H. D. the elder, the nonjuror and voluminous author, who died in 1711; the son lived till 1784. See too Lechler, *op. cit.*, pp. 412 ff.

p. 188, note 1. **rejoinders.** Of these I have seen: (1) *The Oxford Young Gentleman's Reply*, 1743, professedly by the unknown 'young gentleman' addressed in Dodwell's tract; (2) G. Benson, *The Reasonableness of the Christian Religion*, etc., 1743, who says that some had taken the tract seriously (among these, by the way, appears to have been Byrom), but that 'the adversaries of revelation glory in it as unanswerable'; and who, in laborious dialogue form, offers a defence 'either against an enthusiastic believer or a disguised infidel' (*i.e.* whichever Dodwell may really be); (3) T. Mole, *The Grounds of the Christian Faith Rational*, 1743, who pleads that Dodwell has misinterpreted all his texts; and (4) John Leland (*View*, etc., ed. 1837, pp. 123 ff.), who is very flat and commonplace. On Thomas Morgan see Lechler, pp. 370 ff.

p. 188, note 2. **Clarke.** Alluding flippantly to the great Samuel Clarke, who is not specifically discussed in my text; for he died in 1729, and his Boyle Lectures of 1704-5, with their geometrical style, are now arid. But in 1730 he was still the leading *a priori* metaphysician, and influenced the deists much. The ethical parts of his theory, an attempt to base morality on a rock of its own apart from utility, etc., are the least outworn. Clarke, with his Arian views, was but half-orthodox.

p. 188, note 3. **Annet.** His chief earlier works are in a *Collection of Tracts of a certain Free Inquirer, noted by his Sufferings for his Opinions*; n.d., but clearly late in or after Annet's lifetime. The tract *Freethinking the Great Duty of Religion* is dated 1739.

p. 189. **Essay on Man.** Pope's drafts upon Bolingbroke are arrayed by J. C. Collins, *B.*, 1889, p. 192, note, and further by Sichel, *B. and his Times*, 1902, ii. 316 ff. Both writers drive the parallel very hard. Sichel, ii. 407 ff.,

exalts Bolingbroke as a theological thinker, and controverts, I think with little success, the estimate of Sir Leslie Stephen.

p. 190. **Butler.** T. Bartlett, *Memoirs of the Life, Character, and Writings of J. B.*, 1839. *Works*, ed. W. E. Gladstone, 2 vols., 1896, and J. H. Bernard, 2 vols., 1900. See, for a masterly account, C. D. Broad, 'B. as a Moralist,' in *Hibbert Journal*, Oct. 1923.

p. 198, note 1. **the debate.** One writer consulted but omitted from the text is Peter Browne (died 1735), an assailant of Toland; his *Procedure* [etc.] *of Human Understanding* (1728, anon.) is attacked in *Alciphron*, third dialogue, for its view that the divine attributes are not to be taken literally, but are only understood by analogy. In his *Analogy* (1733), Browne, on Lockian lines, repeats that we cannot apprehend such immaterial things as they really are, because they derive from no 'perception' or 'idea.'

p. 198, note 2. **Middleton.** *Misc. Works* (*i.e.* except *Life of Cicero*), four vols., 1752. The best account (to which I am much indebted) is still Sir L. Stephen's, *op. cit.*, ch. iv. sec. vi. The *Free Inquiry* was dated 1749, but published in Dec. 1748 (see *Misc. Works*, vol. i., *Catalogue*).

p. 198, note 3. **Wesley.** *A Letter to the Rev. Conyers Middleton, occasioned by his late 'Free Inquiry,'* 1749 (anon., but authorship certain). See too p. 121: 'Would it not have been readier to overthrow all those testimonies at a stroke, by proving there never was any devil in the world? Then the whole affair of *casting him out* had been at an end.'

p. 198, note 4. **Gibbon.** On *Letter from Rome*, see *D. and F.*, ch. xxviii., note 96; on *Free Inquiry*, *id.*, ch. xv., 'the third cause'; on his own conversion, *Memoirs*, ed. G. B. Hill, 1900, pp. 67-9.

p. 200, note 1. **witches.** *Misc. Works*, 1752, i. 179-80. See too, in reply to the same objection, p. 176: 'the history of miracles is of a kind totally different from that of common events; the one always to be suspected of course, without the strongest evidence to confirm it: the other to be admitted of course, without as strong reason to suspect it.'

p. 200, note 2. **Parr.** See his preface to his edn. of Bellenden's *De Statu Libri tres*, 1787, for his findings on the matter, and his praise of Middleton's style (both quoted in Nichols, *Lit. Anecdotes*, v. 405 ff.): 'animum fuisse eiusdem parum candidum ac sincerum, id vero fateor invitus, dolens, coactus.' I have only compared the accounts of Cicero's birthplace, of his visit to Asia, and of the murder of Caesar; but Parr seems to be well justified. Middleton's protests, in his preface, concerning his laborious searches through Cicero are suspicious; he does not *say* that they were unaided.

p. 201, note 1. **first in the field.** I owe this point to the note on Middleton in Craik's *English Prose Selections*, iv. 15-16 (1894), by G. Saintsbury.

p. 201, note 2. **Warburton.** I have used the *Works*, seven vols., 1788, edited by R. Hurd; and also Hurd's *Life* (originally in 1794 edn.) in vol. i. of the *Works*, 1811, twelve vols. Hurd's adulation is corrected in the judicious *Life* by J. S. Watson, 1863. See too *Letters from an Eminent Prelate to one of his Friends* (*i.e.* Hurd), 1809. It is hardly for Warburton's shade to complain of the sharp language of Leslie Stephen, *op. cit.*; but the case for him is more fairly stated by J. Neville Figgis in *Typical English Churchmen*, ed. W. E. Collins, 1902, pp. 215-256.

p. 205. **Law.** *Bibliography*: full, including Boehme and other relevant 'mystics,' in *Camb. Eng. Lit.*, vol. ix. ch. xii. (in reference to the chapter by Caroline F. E. Spurgeon). *Life*: many original data in Christopher Walton's (anon.) *Notes and Materials*, etc., 1854, pp. 334 ff., 496 ff. (otherwise a huge maddish exposition of Boehme's and Law's system). See too J. Byrom's *Private Journal* (note below); and Gibbon's *Memoirs* (note below). The standard Life is J. H. Overton's *W. L., Nonjuror and Mystic*, 1881, which includes a careful review (pp. 418 ff.) of Law's historical position among the mystics, Swedenborgians, etc. *Works*: nine vols., 1753-6; reprinted with some additions by G. B. Morgan ('G. Moreton'), nine vols., 1892-3 (my reff. are to this). *Liberal and Mystical Writings of W. L.*, a selection by W. Scott Palmer and W. P. Du Bose, 1908. Stephen Hobhouse, *W. L. and XVIIIth Cent. Quakerism*, 1927, prints original (Walton) MSS. of interest from Dr. Williams's Library: *e.g.* of Law's censures on Quakerism, and his letters to Fanny Henshaw, and new ones to Byrom. Many reprints (*e.g.* in 'Everyman's Library') of the *Serious Call*. *Comment:* see Miss Spurgeon, as above, and Stephen, *op. cit.*

p. 206. **quarrel** (over stage plays). For the antecedents see (Sir) E. Gosse, *Life of W. Congreve*, 1888, pp. 96-130; and A. Beljame, *Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre au xviii^e^ Siècle*, 1881, pp. 244-261.

p. 207. **Gibbon.** *Memoirs* (Lord Sheffield's redaction), ed. G. B. Hill, 1900, pp. 21-3; and pp. 273-6 (Hill's App. ii.). In his tribute, Gibbon remarks that Law's 'vigorous mind' was 'clouded with enthusiasm'; and that his 'sallies of religious frenzy' against the stage 'must not extinguish the praise' that is due to him 'as a wit and a scholar.' Hill notes the difficulty of Hester Gibbon's age; a point anticipated by Richard Tighe in his *Short Account of . . . W. L.*, 1813, who says that she must have been 'rather an imperfect copy than a model' for 'Miranda.' Tighe, though very brief, saves for us a record of Law's appearance (quoted by all later biographers), saying that he was 'naturally more inclined to be merry than sad.'

p. 208, note 1. **Tindal.** *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 1730. Law's handling, though acute, seems captious and rhetorical if read beside Butler's trituration of the deist.

p. 208, note 2. **experts.** See Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, *op. cit.*, pp. 314-18, for an account both of Boehme's scheme and of Law's adaptation, or clarification, of it.

p. 209, note 1. '**That the deadness . . .**' From *An Appeal*, etc., in *Works* (1892-3), vi. 121-2.

p. 209, note 2. '**Out of this transcendent . . .**' From the *Way to Divine Knowledge*, in *Works*, vii. 199-200.

p. 211, note 1. **Byrom.** *Private Journal and Literary Remains*, ed. Richard Parkinson, 1854-7, Chetham Society *Publications*, nos. 32, 34, 40, 44 (two vols., each in two parts). *Poems*: there were edd. in 1773 and 1814; but the standard one is that of (Sir) Adolphus W. Ward, Chetham Society, nos. 29, 30, 34-5, 70; vols. i. and ii. (ii. in two parts), 1894-5; vol. iii., 1912; with the amplest notes, giving the sources in Law, etc. The verses I quote are in ii. 409 ('By a process'); ii. 461 ('The Church'); ii. 390 ('For Nature'). For Byrom's other verse see my text *ante*, Vol. II. pp. 34-5. See too (Sir) L. Stephen, *Studies of a Bibliographer*, two vols., 1888, vol. i.

p. 211, note 2. **liked to be paraphrased.** See Parkinson, *op. cit.*, ii. 519 ff. (1751). Law to Byrom: 'I begin to have some jealousy about your verse. You indeed sing for me, but so sweetly that you may (for aught I know) sing my prose out of date.' Byrom to Law (wishing his verse could be bound up with the *Spirit of Prayer*): 'without which, I may be jealous in my turn, that the verse will drop for want of its support; it wants to cling like an ivy to an oak.' The *Journal* is rich in material concerning Law, most of which is embodied in Overton, *op. cit.*

p. 212. **John Wesley.** Literature endless. *Bibliography* (including Charles Wesley) by Richard Green, 1896. Many *Lives*: two at full length, by L. Tyerman, *Life and Times of J. W.*, three vols., 1870-1; and by J. Simon, 1921-7, in progress, four volumes out, under various titles (*J. W. and the Religious Societies*, etc.). Also Southey's *Life*, 1820, remains a classic despite all shortcomings. See too J. Telford, *Life*, ed. 1899; J. H. Overton, *J. W.*, 1891; J. H. Rigg, *The Living W.*, edn. 1891 (controverts some of Tyerman's harsh judgments); and W. H. Hutton, *J. W.*, 1927. *Works*: I have used chiefly T. Jackson's edn., fourteen vols., 1829-1831; but many of Wesley's writings and editions of books are not there and will never be reprinted. *Letters* (selected), ed. G. Eayrs, 1915. *Journals*: 'standard' edn. by N. Curnock, eight vols., 1909-16 (the *Extracts* Wesley published are also in Jackson, vols. i.-iv.); and there have been many abridgments.—For much illustrative matter see *New Hist. of Methodism*, two vols., 1909, by three authors: *e.g.* i. 1-75, on the 'place of Methodism' by H. B. Workman, and the list of authorities by the same, ii. 534 ff.

p. 215. **code.** For the ciphers, etc., see account and facsimiles in *Journal* (vol. i.), ed. Curnock; who gives, besides much editorial matter, (1) corrected text of Wesley's *Extracts*, as reprinted in Jackson, vols. i.-iv.; (2) abundant new additions thereto from MSS.; (3) in footnote, summaries (with extracts) from the copious diaries, plans of study, etc. The fresh entries on the American visit, above all, are indispensable.

p. 216. **Grace Murray.** J. A. Leger, *J. W.'s Last Love*, 1910, gives a transcript of this MS. in the B.M.; and also an account of Wesley's marriage, with an analysis of his character and its contradictions.

p. 221. **ideals of writing.** See *Letters*, ed. Eayrs, p. 435 (to Furley); and compare *id.*, p. 439 (1774), the warning against using long words to 'poor people'; and 'long sentences utterly confound their intellects; they know not where they are. . . . Short sentences . . . strike them through and through.'

p. 222, note 1. **Samuel the younger.** See his *Poems on Several Occasions*, ed. James Nichols, with *Life* by William Nichols, 1862.

p. 222, note 2. **Memorials.** See G. J. Stevenson, *Memorials of the W. Family*, 1876, for most of the details in the text, for chronicle of the other members, and for genealogy. For an earlier and scantier account see Adam Clarke, *Memoirs of the W. Family*, 1829 (who, however, gives further poems by Mehetabel Wesley). Susanna's letter to her husband is given by Stevenson, p. 196; also, in the chapter on Martha Wesley, whose ten children died, a surprising letter of John's: 'I believe the death of your children is a great instance of the goodness of God towards you,' etc.

p. 224, note 1. **Charles Wesley.** *Life*, by Thomas Jackson, two vols., 1841

by John Telford, ed. 1900. *Journal*, ed. T. Jackson, two vols., 1849; and *Early Journal (1736-9)*, ed. J. Telford, 1909 (contains new passages from the shorthand entries, especially private dialogues with Oglethorpe and others).

p. 224, note 2. **hymn-writing.** *Poet. Works of J. and C. W.*, ed. G. Osborn, thirteen vols., 1868-72. See J. Julian, *Dict. of Hymnology*, 1907, p. 1260a: it has been 'the common practice for a hundred years or more to ascribe all the translations from the German to J. W. [Charles not knowing the language] and to assign to C. W. all the original hymns except such as are traceable to J. W. through his *Journals* and other works.' Osborn (vol. viii., 'advertisement') is disposed to assign more to John than are usually allowed. Julian, pp. 1261-6, gives an immense list of Wesley hymns 'in common use.' See too Green, *Bibliography*, for the old editions. See too *Methodist Hymnbook* of 1904 for interesting notes on that of 1780; and for the chosen hymns of John Byrom, John Cennick, A. M. Toplady, and William Williams ('Guide me, O thou great Jehovah'); and H. B. Workman in *New Hist. of Methodism*, i. 235 ff., and on 'the hymn-writers of Methodism.'

p. 226. **Jenyns.** *Works*, four vols., 1790, with memoir (little but eulogy) by C. N. Cole. *Free Inquiry* in vol. ii., with the preface added to a second edn., summarising the argument, repelling objections, but not naming Johnson. For rhymes made by and on Jenyns, in this connection, see Boswell pp. 105-6, ed. M. Morris ('Globe'). My quotation on pre-existence is from *Works*, i. 198-202. Also on Jenyns see Stephen, *op. cit.*, i. 386-9, an acute but I think one-sided account.

p. 229. **Doddridge.** *Works*, ten vols., 1802, with *Life* by Job Orton. *Corr. and Diary*, ed. J. D. Humphreys, five vols., 1829-31. C. Stanford, *P. D.*, 1880, gives some details not found in the above. For a reference to Blair and the *Grave*, which Doddridge corrected, see *Corr.*, iv. 73, 236; for the dream, iv. 356.

p. 231. **Bolingbroke.** W. Sichel's *B. and his Times*, two vols., 1901 and 1902, is the fullest study, with much new matter, not available to T. Macknight in his *Life*, 1863. Macknight, though now corrected in many points, is still useful and readable. Sichel, ii. 456-7, gives a *List of Works* (and see *D.N.B.*). A. Hassall, *Life of Viscount B.*, 1889 (and see his edn. of the *Spirit of Patriotism* and the *Patriot King*, 1917). J. Churton Collins, *B., a Historical Study*, 1889: see particularly on his 'literary life' pp. 155-223 (too indiscriminate in praise, but full of valuable data). Among the items of interest not in David Mallet's five vols. (1754) are the *Familiar Epistle* (to Warburton) and the *Reflections concerning Innate Moral Principles*, 1752, stated to be by B., and in French with Eng. tr. opposite. Some of the best of the *Letters*, outside the Swift correspondence, are scattered in the *Marchmont Papers*. Sichel prints many more, to others. The best general verdict known to me is W. Bagehot's *B. as a Statesman*, 1863, in his *Biog. Studies*, ed. R. H. Hutton, 1881.

p. 233. **Craftsman.** Mallet reprinted many of Bolingbroke's known contributions; but see Sichel, *op. cit.*, ii. 248 ff., for denial of many of the traditional allotments to Amhurst, Pulteney, etc., according to the initial signed ('A.,' 'C.,' etc.), and fresh ascriptions (mostly, and boldly, on evidence of style) to Swift, Arbuthnot, and others.

p. 238, note 1. **Burke.** In *Speeches*, edn. 1816, i. 63, Nov. 27, 1770.

p. 238, note 2. **Junius.** Literature too large to summarise ; see, above all, Sir L. Stephen in *D.N.B.*, *s.v.* 'Sir P. Francis' ; and *C.E.L.*, vol. x. ch. xvii. (by C. W. Prévité-Orton), and bibliography (referring to fuller bibliographies). Many modern reprints (edited) of the edition of 1772.—*Memoirs of Sir P. Francis*, by J. Parkes and H. Merivale, two vols., 1867 ; contains the autobiographic fragment, i. 353 ff., and the 'characters' of the kings, ii. 464 ff. Francis has hardly a good word for any public man who had died during the past generation, except Rockingham. Chatham was 'a great actor, and latterly identified himself with the great part he acted.' See too B. Francis and E. Keary, *The Francis Letters*, two vols., 1901 (excursus on Junius by C. F. Keary). Latest full edn. of Junius's *Letters* by C. W. Everett, 1927 (who seeks to identify him with Lord Shelburne, I think on slender grounds).

p. 242. **Grenville.** *Grenville Papers*, four vols., 1852-4, iv. 379, Oct. 20, 1768. The plea of W. J. Smith, the editor, that Junius was Lord Temple, has not found acceptance ; but Temple is often thought to have been his close ally.

p. 244. **Burke.** *Life* : Sir J. Prior's *Memoir*, fifth edn., 1854, still the fullest, and the most useful for the facts. T. Macknight, *Hist. of Life and Times of E. B.*, three vols., 1858-60, though inflated in manner, adds material of value. John (Lord) Morley's vol. in *E.M.L.*, 1879, remains the best brief memoir and comment (and see his *B.*, 1867) ; but consult too Bertram Newman, *B.*, 1927. A. P. I. Samuels, *Early Life, Corr., and Writings of B.*, 1923, gives much new matter of interest. *Corr.*, scattered ; the chief collection is that by Earl Fitzwilliam and Sir Richard Bourke, four vols., 1844. *Works* : for early editions see W. H. Hunt in *D.N.B.* (and his whole article). The best for use are those in 'World's Classics,' six vols., 1906-7 (not exhaustive) ; and the much fuller six vols., with two more of *Speeches*, Bohn, 1854-5. *Speeches* (including much in summary or third person), four vols., 1816. *Select Works* (with instructive comment), ed. E. J. Payne, three vols., 1897. Many edns. of single works—essays, etc.—too numerous to cite. For some further notes, especially on the later works, see *Survey, 1780-1830*, i. 439-40 and 234-57.

p. 246. **collegian.** On all this see Samuels, *op. cit.* : for the *Reformer*, pp. 160 ff. ; pp. 180 ff., on the affair of Charles Lucas, the democrat, whom Burke, it is now shown, supported in earnest and not in irony ; and pp. 203 ff., for the interesting minute-book of the Trinity Historical Society. Samuels suggests Burke as the author of seven tracts of 1748-9 ; the second *Letter to the Citizens of Dublin*, with its highly orthodox Whiggery, certainly seems to betray his hand.

p. 249. **William Burke.** See *Letters of J. Boswell*, ed. C. B. Tinker, two vols., 1926, ii. 386 : Boswell informs Temple that Burke said to him, 'I did not write it, I do not deny that a friend did it ; I revised it' ; and that he had it from Malone that the friend was William Burke ; 'but it is evident,' adds Boswell, 'that Burke himself has contributed a great deal to it.'

p. 250. **Present Discontents.** See the edn. of W. Murison, 1913, for a careful summary of the work and of the objections made to it.

p. 255. **toleration.** I do not load the text with Burke's various views on this subject. The chief sources are: *Speeches*, 1816, i. 94-112, against the petition (1772) of certain clergy to be dispensed from signing the Articles (see the notable passage on the Bible as a 'collection of infinite variety, of cosmogony, theology, history,' etc.); the speech (1773) for the *Relief of Protestant Dissenters* (as distinguished from the real enemy, the '*wicked* dissenter,' namely the deist or 'a theist'—apparently here confounded); the *Letter to a Peer of Ireland*, 1782, against Irish penal laws; and that of 1792 to Langrishe. In 1790, fearing for the Establishment, he resisted a bill for removal of tests; in 1792 he inveighed against the Unitarians. In the same year he said, 'In a Christian commonwealth the church and the state are one and the same thing, being integral parts of the same whole.'

p. 266. **figures.** For more on this see *Survey, 1780-1830*, i. 250-6.

p. 270. **self-reproach.** For useful list of such references see *Memoirs of Gibbon*, ed. G. B. Hill, 1900, pp. 295-6 (App. xxi.); and p. 122, Gibbon's words, 'the old reproach, that no British altars had been raised to the muse of history, was recently disproved,' etc. Hill quotes from *Annual Register*, 1761, the sentence, very probably Burke's, that 'the historical work Mr. Hume first published discharged our country from this opprobrium.'

p. 273. **'more remote.'** This and the previous quotation from the 1759 volume are kept verbally in the edition of 1778 (that with the 'author's last corrections'), except that the clause 'and besides . . . the monarch' has been added (at what, if any, date between, I have not inquired). Hume's substratum of Whiggery, it will be seen, remained visible to the last.

p. 277. **Robertson.** Dugald Stewart's excellent *Account*, read to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1801, can be seen in vol. i. of Robertson's *Works*, twelve vols., 1817. None of the works appear to have been edited 'up to date' by a modern scholar.

p. 283, note 1. **Gibbon.** Standard ed. of *Decline and Fall* by J. B. Bury, seven vols., 1896-1900. The *Memoirs*, ed. (in a companion vol.) by G. Birkbeck Hill, 1900, is a reprint of Lord Sheffield's work, with valuable notes and appendices added; there are several other reprints of the text of 1796. The original six drafts are given in *The Autobiographies of E. G.*, ed. John Murray, 1896; and the correspondence, in full, is in *Private Letters of E. G.*, ed. R. E. Prothero, two vols., 1896. The first Lord Sheffield printed selections from these in *Misc. Works of E. G.*, three vols., 1796, etc., with the memoir. Gibbon's dissertations, etc., he appended in the ed. of *Misc. Works*, five vols., 1814. For further MS. matter, see list in *Camb. Eng. Lit.*, vol. x., ch. xiii. p. 506; and also *Proceedings of the Gibbon Commemoration, 1794-1894*, 1895. The best studies of Gibbon are those by Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du Lundi*, vol. viii., 1853; W. Bagehot, in *Estimates*, etc., 1858; J. C. Morison, *Gibbon*, 1878; J. B. Bury, introduction to standard ed., 1896; and Sir Adolphus W. Ward, in *Camb. Eng. Lit.*, vol. x., 1913. See too J. M. Robertson, *Pioneer Humanists*, 1907, pp. 271-371, for some valuable comments.

p. 283, note 2. **Mlle Curchod.** For the facts and notices of this celebrated affair see footnote of editor in *Private Letters*, ed. R. E. Prothero, i. 40; also G. B. Hill, App. xx. in *Memoirs of G.*, pp. 293-5; and General Meredith Read, *Historic Studies in the Vaud*, two vols., 1897.

p. 285. **a philosopher.** W. W. Currie, *Memoir of James Currie*, two vols., 1831, i. 383-4; 'a few days before he (Gibbon) died, he conversed on a future state with Mrs. Holroyd, of which he spoke as one having little or no hope; but professed that neither then, nor at any time, had he ever felt the horror which some express, of annihilation' (letter of J. C., 7 Feb., 1805).

p. 286. **Burges.** Quoted from his *Correspondence*, in editor's note to *Private Letters*, ii. 82; where Burges also describes the discomfiture of Gibbon, in an argument over the table, by William Pitt.

p. 287, note 1. **Britain.** *Misc. Works*, 1814, iii. 559, in the *Address* (1793) recommending John Pinkerton as an editor, giving Gibbon's conception of research, and deprecating the neglect of the 'monkish historians.' There are several patriotic passages of the kind in the *Memoirs*.

p. 287, note 2. **a Supreme Being.** *Misc. Works*, iii. 55; these 'outlines' were made up in 1758-63.

p. 288, note 1. **Longinus.** *Misc. Works*, v. 252 ff. Gibbon accepts the identification of the author (not questioned till the next century) with the Longinus sacrificed by Zenobia (see *D. and F.*, ch. xi.), A.D. 273.

p. 288, note 2. **Johnson.** Nearly all Gibbon's allusions to him are acrimonious: see the collection by G. B. Hill, App. xxxii. in *Memoirs*, pp. 311-13; Boswell makes the worst of the infidel historian. He does not appear to record any provocation or retaliation by Johnson, except a jest that Gibbon was said 'once to have been a Mahometan.'

p. 288, note 3. **'Ossian.'** Hume, like Johnson, disbelieved; and in his letter to Gibbon of March 18, 1776, says that Gibbon had been 'over and above indulgent to us [the Scots] in speaking of the matter with hesitation'; that is in *Decline and Fall*, ch. vi. (i. 129), where Gibbon half-accepts the possible authenticity of the poems ('If we could indulge the pleasing supposition . . .'), but notes the slip made by Macpherson-Ossian as to the 'nickname' 'Caracalla.' In ch. xv. (ii. 64, note) Gibbon is still doubtful; also in ch. xxv. (iii. 40, 43, 44) ('the same people [Caledonians] whose generous humanity seems to inspire the songs of Ossian'). See App. xxxvi. of G. B. Hill, *Memoirs*, pp. 315-16. I do not find that Gibbon ever persuaded or committed himself on the negative side; otherwise, he would scarcely have admitted these allusions into his *text*.

p. 289. **advances in learning.** J. B. Bury's introduction to his ed. of the *Decline and Fall*, vol. i. pp. xxxi-lxviii, is impossible to summarise; there are ample notes and appendices to the whole work.

p. 291. **'sublime but unequal Dante.'** So in *Misc. Works*, iii. 457 (in *Antiq. of the House of Brunswick*); elsewhere (*id.*, i. 40) he is a 'wild but original genius.' I have found no other reference; and Bury remarks (vii. 267, footnote, ch. lxx., the story of Rienzi) on Gibbon's strange omission to name the *De Monarchia*, 'which, though it expressed the Ghibelline ideal and looked for salvation to Germany, was nevertheless animated with the same idea which inspired Rienzi, in so far as it recognised that the rule of the world belonged to Rome.'

p. 300. **Orme.** The *History* has not been reprinted since 1861 (Madras), when the fourth edition, of 1803 (posthumous, but revised by author), was repro-

duced. The opening *Dissertation*, a sketch of the Moghul conquests, contains a scanty, inadequate note on the Hindu character and beliefs. For Bobilee, see vol. ii. pp. 255-9; for the Black Hole, ii. 76; for estimate of Dupleix, i. 378-9; and for an equally balanced one of Lally, ii. 734 ff. An anthology of Orme's best passages would be worth making. His vol. iii. consists of maps.

p. 301. **other historians.** On these see *C.E.L.*, vol. x., chs. xii. (W. H. Hunt) and xiii. (Sir A. Ward). On Mitford, etc., there are notes in *Survey, 1780-1830*, ch. xxv.

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